

Skin Cancer Screening and Prevention Case Study 2022 (ANSWERS)

Patient Profile

S.N., a 30-year-old white woman, comes to the clinic for a physical examination. She is fair skinned with blue eyes. She works as a waitress and loves outdoor sports.

Subjective Data

- Wants a “checkup” because her father recently died of melanoma
- Wants to know if she will get this cancer
- Loves the “outdoors” and swims every day

Objective Data

- Blood pressure 112/68, pulse 60, temperature 97.6°F, respirations 16
- Height 5'5, weight 125 lb
- Arms, legs, and face are darkly tanned
- Skin examination within normal limits, no evidence of lesions, rashes, or pigment changes

Discussion Questions

1. What is the priority of care for S.N. and why?

Answer: Patient teaching is essential to review preventive measures to reduce the risk of skin cancer. It is important that you teach S.N. that prolonged and repeated sun exposure is a major factor in precancerous and cancerous lesions. Fair-skinned individuals should be especially cautious about excessive sun exposure because they have less natural protection.

Rationale: Education about the use of sunscreen, limiting sun exposure, and wearing protective clothing is needed because the patient is fair skinned and has had a family member die from skin cancer. These factors place the patient at an increased risk for developing skin cancer herself.

2. Along with the physical examination, what other form of nursing assessment is indicated?

Answer: It is important that you explore the situation of her father’s recent death from melanoma. A psychosocial and spiritual assessment may be indicated and may reveal additional nursing care needs.

Rationale: The patient is motivated to visit the clinic for a skin check-up because of the death of her father. There may be underlying fear and spiritual issues that need addressed.

3. How do you distinguish between a normal mole and malignant melanoma?

Answer: Remember the ABCDE for detection of skin lesions.

- Asymmetrical

- o Border is irregular
- o Color changes or variations
- o Diameter is 6 mm or more
- o Evolving in appearance

Rationale: The ABCDE mnemonic provides a good first check in identifying skin issues on one's body. A closer check-up by a dermatologist and a biopsy is needed to further distinguish between a normal and malignant mole.

4. List 7 risk factors for the development of skin cancer. What factors does S.N. have?

Answer: The patient is fair skinned, loves outdoor activities, has sun damaged skin already, and has a family member who died of skin cancer.

Rationale: Risk factors for skin cancer include having a fair skin type (blonde or red hair and blue or green eyes), history of chronic sun exposure, family history of skin cancer, exposure to tar and systemic arsenicals, living near the equator, outdoor occupations, frequent outdoor recreational activities, history of repeated sunburns, using indoor tanning booths, and outdoor sunbathing. S.N.'s factors are fair skin, history of exposure, family history, and participating in outdoor recreational activities.

5. What would you include in a teaching plan for S. N. to reduce her risk of developing precancerous and cancerous lesions?

Answer:

- o Avoid the use of tanning beds and sun lamps.
- o Limit exposure to the sun as much as possible, especially between the hours of 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM Standard Time (11:00 AM and 3:00 PM Daylight Savings Time).
- o Wear protective clothing, including sunglasses, wide-brimmed hats, long sleeves, and long pants, as appropriate.
- o Use sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30. Get sunscreen that guards against ultraviolet A and B.
- o Apply the sunscreen 20 to 30 minutes before going outdoors, even in cloudy weather. Reapply every 2 to 3 hours, using 1 oz per application. Sunscreen should be reapplied immediately after swimming.
- o Perform a monthly skin assessment, noting any new lesions or blemishes.

Rationale: The role of the nurse is to educate and provide information that will allow the patient to make an informed decision. The risks of cancer and how to prevent cancer is needed with this patient because she is at a greater risk for developing skin cancer.