Genetic test to determine risk of metastatic spread in melanoma patients helps guide clinical management

SKIN: The Journal of Cutaneous Medicine(TM), Prospective Clinical Impact Evaluation of a 31-Gene Expression Profile Test for Management of Melanoma Patients

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, March 12, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Melanoma continues to be a significant cause of death in the United States and worldwide, and often occurs at a younger age than most other cancers. Due to advanced melanoma being less common, the majority of melanoma-related deaths occur in people diagnosed with “early-stage” disease. To this end, there has been significant research aimed at developing a method of further risk-stratifying those with early melanoma, so that patients at a higher risk of subsequent metastatic spread and death can be identified, monitored, and treated appropriately.

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>
> *Larry Dillon, MD*

One such method of risk-stratification is the 31-gene expression profile test. This genetic test analyzes the genes being expressed by melanomas to determine the relative likelihood of future spread. The test has previously been shown to be very effective in predicting risk of metastasis, but until now, relatively little was known about how physicians utilize the test results to actually guide their management of patients with melanoma.

In new study published today in SKIN: The Journal of Cutaneous Medicine(TM), Larry Dillon, MD, and colleagues followed 247 early melanoma patients at 16 centers who had the 31-gene expression profile test performed. The authors found that, in the majority of cases, a low-risk test result often led to decreased intensity of follow-up (e.g. less frequent office visits, less CT scans, etc.) and a high-risk test result led to increased intensity of follow-up a majority of the time. The results indicate that the test “helps focus healthcare resources to patients who need them the most,” says Dilllon. Further, the authors noted that the changes made were risk-appropriate and in line with existing guidelines, demonstrating that this test can serve as another tool in the physician’s arsenal to help manage melanoma. The results of the study suggest that genetic expression profiling of melanoma could lead to more efficient use of testing resources and lower healthcare costs.

SKIN: The Journal of Cutaneous MedicineTM is a peer-reviewed online medical journal that is the official journal of The National Society for Cutaneous Medicine. The mission of SKIN is to provide an enhanced and accelerated route to disseminate new dermatologic knowledge for all aspects of cutaneous disease.

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