

Referral and intervention – timeline of melanoma management in Cork



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Background:

- Melanoma is the 4th most common cancer diagnosed in Ireland with approximately 1000 new cases diagnosed annually¹
- Melanoma is a rapidly progressing and highly metastatic form of cancer, timing of intervention is vital
- Pigmented Lesion Clinics (PLC)** were set up to provide rapid access treatment for melanoma and to improve melanoma prognosis
- PLC performance assessed in 2010 showed an overall improvement in melanoma prognosis following the introduction of the PLC in Cork²

Aims:

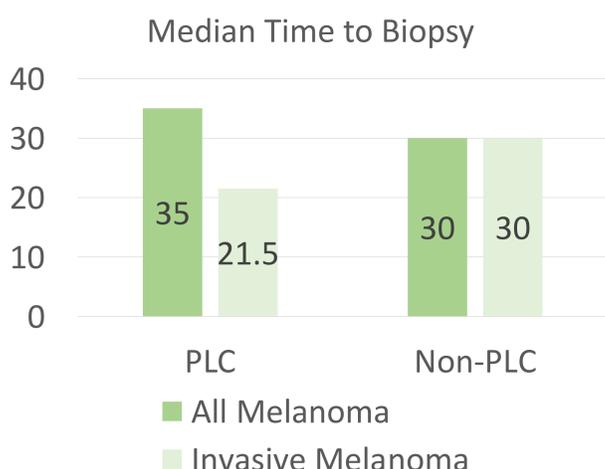
- To calculate and analyse the **time in days** from:
 - Referral to biopsy
 - Biopsy to wide local excision (WLE) in **PLC** and **non-PLC** clinics (dermatology and plastic surgery)
- To compare these against the Melanoma Key Performance Indicators (KPI) by the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) which state:
 - 95% of patients should be biopsied within 42 days
 - 95% of patients should have WLE within 84 days of biopsy

Method:

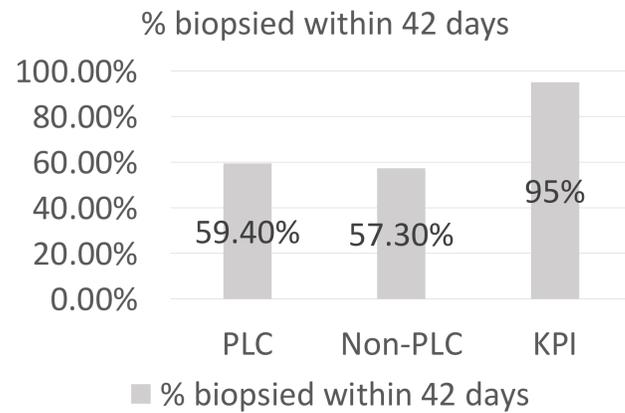
- Retrospective chart review of patients diagnosed with melanoma in two University Hospitals in Cork from 01/01/2019 to 31/12/2019, **n=182 (PLC n=113, non-PLC n=69)**
 - Invasive melanoma n=95 (PLC n=54, non-PLC N=41)
- Data was collected from patient charts and pathology reports
- The group was split in two based on the clinic they were referred to (PLC v non-PLC) and data analysis was performed using SPSS v27

Results:

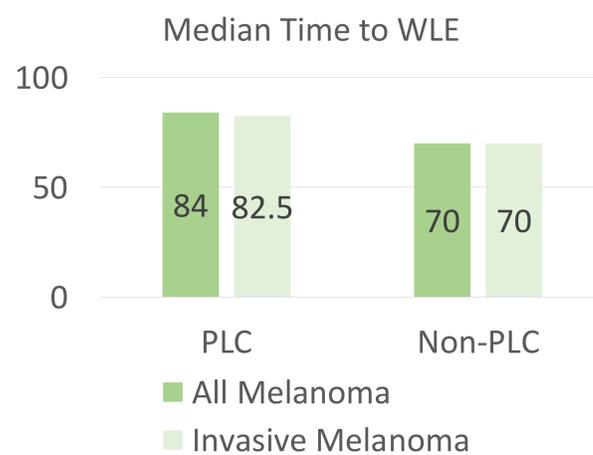
Time to Biopsy:



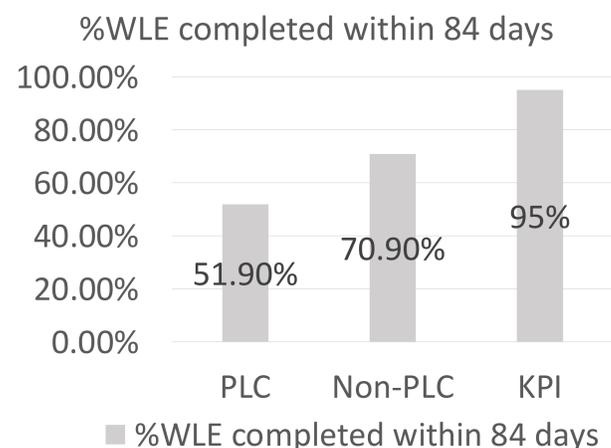
- Statistical significance was not found between the two groups (P=0.617)



Time to Wide Local Excision:



- Statistical significance **was found** between the two groups overall (U=1660, P=0.000)
- Statistical significance was not noted between the two groups for invasive melanoma (P=0.079)



Discussion & Conclusion:

- PLC vs Non-PLC:**
 - A significant difference was not observed between the two clinics from time to referral to biopsy
 - A significant difference between time from biopsy to WLE was noted, with the pigmented lesion clinic taking approximately 14 days longer. The findings may be attributed to the fact that some clinics, such as plastic surgery, perform both the biopsy and WLE without the need for referral to other services, resulting in a shorter time interval between biopsy and WLE
- When compared to the NCCP Melanoma KPIs neither clinic met the standard for the two guidelines assessed
- Further research is currently being undertaken to assess the Breslow thickness of melanoma referred to each clinic as this may indicate whether suspected advanced melanoma is referred urgently and directly to non-PLC clinics such as dermatology

References:

- Skin cancer (melanoma) - Overview [Internet]. Www2.hse.ie. 2021 [cited 8 April 2021]. Available from: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/melanoma-skin-cancer/skin-cancer-melanoma-overview.html>
- S Field, S Deady, J Fitzgibbon, M Murphy, H Comber. Improved malignant melanoma prognosis at a consultant delivered multidisciplinary pigmented lesion clinic in Cork. Ir Med J. 2010; 103(2):40-3.