Melanotic and non-melanotic malignancies of the face and external ear - A review of current treatment concepts and future options.

Abstract:
Skin has the highest incidence and variety of tumors of all organs. Its structure is of great complexity, and every component has the potential to originate a skin neoplasm (SN). Because of its exposed nature, skin is vulnerable to carcinogenic stimuli such as UV radiation. Various entities can cause SN. Nonmelanotic skin cancers (NMSC) are the most common of all cancers, with over one million cases diagnosed annually in the US. Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) accounts for approximately 80% of all NMSC, most of the remaining 20% being squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). The skin of the head and neck is the most common site for tumors, accounting for more than 80% of all NMSC. BCC, SCC, and malignant melanomas (MM) represent 85-90% of all SN. Merkel cell tumors (MCC), lymphoepithelioma-like carcinomas of the skin (LELCS), dermato-fibro-sarcomas, leiomyosarkomas, and Kaposi-sarcomas are less frequent in the facial skin region and the external ear. Based on data from the German Federal Cancer Registry (2003/2004), 140,000 people in Germany were affected by SN (100,000 BCC, 22,000 SCC, 22,000 MM). This number increases considerably if malignant precursors, such as actinic keratosis, are included. Each year, the frequency of SN diagnosis rises by 3-7%. Among all known malignant tumors, MM exhibits the highest rate of increase in
incidence. In the past, SN was primarily diagnosed in people aged 50 years or older. However, recently, the risk for developing SN has shifted, and younger people are also affected. Early diagnosis is significantly correlated with prognosis. Resection of SN creates defects that must be closed with local or microvascular flaps to avoid functional disturbing scar formation and deflection of the nose, eyelids, or lips. All therapeutic strategies for SN, the current standard for adjuvant and systemic treatment, and the management of the increasing number of patients under permanent blood thinner medication are described with regard to the treatment of SN.