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Skin cancer by state and territory

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There is a paucity of Australian state-based data on the incidence of non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC). Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) of the skin are not notifiable diseases and are not collected by the state and territory cancer registries.¹ In a 2002 survey, the Australian age-standardised incidence per 100,000 persons for NMSC was 1170 (BCC 884, SCC 387), with a higher incidence in the northern latitudes.²

By way of comparison, the age-standardised incidence of melanoma (2004–2008) was 48.7 per 100,000 persons in Australia – highest in Queensland (64.3) and lowest in the Northern Territory (30.5).³ Australia-wide BEACH data (2006–2008) showed a problem-managed rate (for new and old problems) of 1107 per 100,000 GP–patient encounters for NMSC, and 99 per 100,000 for melanoma.⁴

This BEACH analysis (Figure 1) presents the number of **new** skin cancer problems managed per 100,000 encounters nationally and for each state and territory, from April 2008 to March 2013. At 481,423 encounters, a total of 3144 new skin cancer problems were recorded (melanoma 6.0%, NMSC 85.3% and unspecified skin cancer 8.7%).

For NMSC, the rate in Queensland (1030) was significantly higher (based on non-overlapping 95% confidence intervals) than the national average (557) and the rates in all other states/territories. For melanoma, the rate in Queensland (66) was significantly higher than the rate in NSW (32), WA (29) and SA (26 per 100,000 GP-patient encounters).

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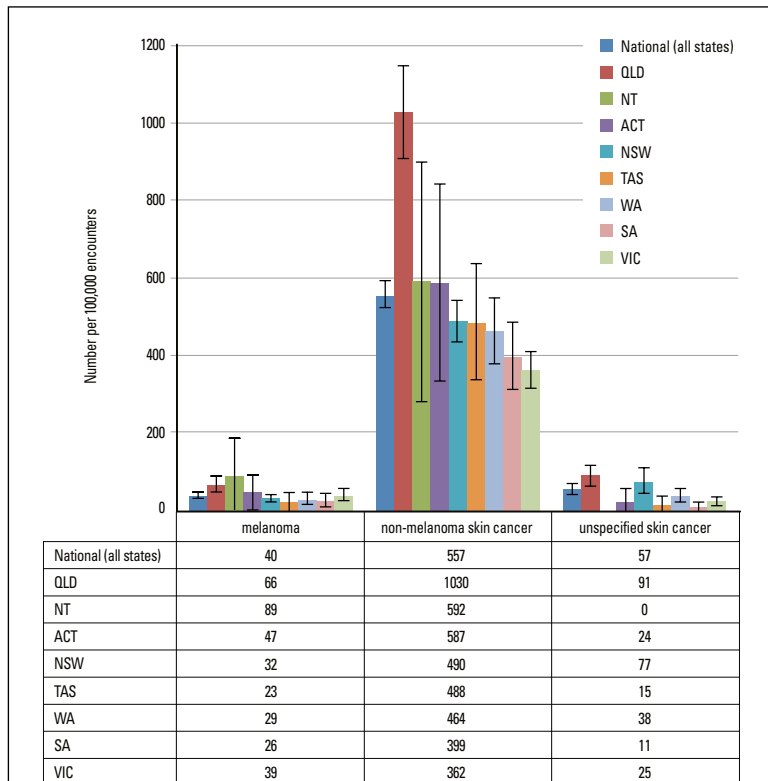


Figure 1. Number of new skin cancer problems managed per 100,000 GP–patient encounters, Australian BEACH data, April 2008 to March 2013 (95% confidence intervals)