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# Management of nonmelanoma skin cancers

## Keywords

skin neoplasms; general practice



From April 2010 to March 2011 in BEACH (Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health), nonmelanoma skin cancers (NMSCs) were managed at one in 100 encounters, suggesting about 1.2 million NMSC patient-doctor encounters nationally in that year.

Basal cell carcinomas made up the majority (56.8%) of NMSC problems managed: squamous cell carcinoma accounted for one-third, and skin carcinomas unspecified made up about 10% of these conditions.

The management rate of NMSCs rose significantly through age groups and was highest among patients aged 75 years and over. The management rate was significantly higher for males than for females. Significantly higher rates of NMSC management were found among patients with Commonwealth healthcare cards (HCC), compared with non-HCC holders; patients from an English speaking background (ESB) compared with those from a non-English speaking background (NESB); and non-Indigenous patients compared with Indigenous Australian patients. *Figure 1* shows the management rates in each specific group.

## Management of NMSCs

A high percentage (54%) of NMSCs were new presentations. Rates of prescribed, advised or supplied medications were low compared with the BEACH average of 69 per 100 problems. Pathology ordering rates were also lower than average, and imaging orders were rarely recorded. On the other hand, procedural treatments were recorded at much higher rates than the BEACH average of 11.1 per 100 problems, as were specialist referrals, which have an average rate of 5.6 in total BEACH data. Details of management for NMSCs are shown in *Table 1*.

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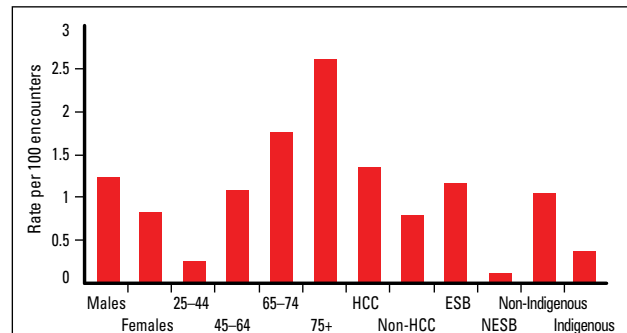


Figure 1. Management rate of nonmelanoma skin cancers within patient groups

**Table 1. Management of nonmelanoma skin cancers**

Management type	Rate per 100 NMSC problems managed (n=966)
<b>Medications</b>	<b>6.7</b>
Imiquimod	0.9
Cephalexin	0.9
Fluorouracil	0.7
<b>Procedures</b>	<b>51.9</b>
Excision/biopsy	38.8
Repair/suture	8.0
<b>Specialist referrals</b>	<b>22.4</b>
Dermatologist	9.2
Plastic surgeon	5.3
<b>Pathology tests</b>	<b>21.1</b>
Histology, skin	20.8
<b>Imaging orders</b>	<b>0.4</b>

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