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Changing the criteria “would not deter the recognition of smaller melanomas, and we would educate patients and the public about how to recognize many smaller lesions,” Dr. Stuart Goldsmith said.



COURTESY DR. STUART GOLDSMITH

ABCDE: Darkness May Beat Diameter

BY KERRI WACHTER

BOSTON — Lesion darkness would make a better criterion for identifying early melanomas than the 6-mm diameter cutoff in the ABCDE criteria currently used by dermatologists and patients, according to Dr. Stuart Goldsmith.

“It’s recognized that all melanomas start as a single cell or a few cells. So microscopically, they’re already cancer, but we’re not even telling patients to look for small lesions,” he said.

“If we were doing okay [in terms of mortality], then it wouldn’t matter. The fact is that we are not doing as well as we want to for our patients,” said Dr. Goldsmith, a dermatologist in Albany, Ga. “More than 8,000 Americans die every year of melanoma—most from cutaneous lesions, lesions on the skin that could have been removed when smaller than 6 mm and in time to save the patient’s life.”

“Dermatology is simply not

on the same page as other specialties in terms of cancer surveillance by the very existence of the diameter criterion,” he said. Even though most other specialties have had more success than dermatology in decreasing cancer mortality rates, other specialties are looking for smaller, earlier lesions, Dr. Goldsmith noted at the American Academy of Dermatology’s Academy 2009 meeting.

For example, 2008 gastroenterology guidelines advocate the prevention of colorectal cancer by using colonoscopy to detect and excise nonobligate, smaller precursor lesions (CA Cancer J. Clin. 2008;58:130-60). Likewise, more advanced imaging is being used to detect breast cancer at earlier stages. Teenage girls are recommended to receive the human papillomavirus vaccine to decrease the risk of cervical cancer. The European Society for Medical Oncology has already eliminat-

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Antioxidants Get Go-Ahead

No increased risk of melanoma seen with supplement use.

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PHACES Risk

Consensus diagnostic criteria proposed by panel of experts.

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Diets Help Ditch the Itch

Avoiding foods such as chocolate may benefit atopic patients.

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Novel H1N1 Flu: What’s New

Trials begin, treatment clarified, and more.

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Certification Plan For Procedural Derm Postponed

Subspecialty proposal opposed by AAD.

BY MARY ELLEN SCHNEIDER

The American Board of Dermatology’s proposal to establish subspecialty certification for procedural dermatology is on hold while board leaders seek to address concerns raised by dermatology societies and individual physicians that certification could divide the specialty and lead to economic credentialing.

The board of directors of the American Board of Dermatology (ABD) will meet in December to discuss the status of the proposal.

“This process will not be

completed in haste,” said Dr. Randall K. Roenigk, president of the ABD.

ABD leaders have heard the concerns of the dermatology community and are in deliberations to modify the proposal accordingly, but much of the controversy is the result of “mischaracterizations” about the impact that subspecialty certification would have for dermatologists without it, said Dr. Roenigk, chairman of the department of dermatology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.

The controversy began last year, when the ABD submitted an application to the American

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CASE OF THE MONTH



COURTESY DR. DONALD J. ADLER

A 46-year-old woman presented with a sudden onset of flagellate erythema—a bizarre pattern of streaky, linear erythematous papules—on the face, neck, trunk, and extremities. The presence of flagellate erythema prompted a review of the woman’s recent meals. To find out how her dinner out resulted in this distinctive pattern of erythema, see **Case of the Month**, page 51.

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