

Commentary

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Joe and Jill Biden's Basal Cell Carcinomas Catalyzing Advocacy in Fight Against Skin Cancer

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ABSTRACT

Basal cell carcinoma is the most common cutaneous malignancy. The incidence of basal cell carcinoma in prominent figures like President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden opens the gate to improving public education on the prevention and treatment of basal cell carcinoma. The Bidens must work with dermatologists to improve public health programs promoting sunscreen use and regular skin examinations.

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Abbreviations

BCC: Basal Cell Carcinoma

PTCH1: Protein Patched Homolog 1

This past year, First Lady Jill Biden underwent a regular skin cancer screening, which revealed a basal cell carcinoma (BCC) above her right eye and the left side of her chest. President Joe Biden, shortly after, had a BCC removed from his chest during a comprehensive health assessment. News stations eager to highlight the stories educated their audience on basal cell carcinoma and sparked a necessary concern to increase research and initiatives to prevent and treat skin cancer.

BCC is the most common type of skin cancer, accounting for approximately 80% of all non-melanoma skin cancers. It is a slow-growing cancer that develops in the basal cells in the epidermis's lower part. BCCs often appear as small, fleshy bumps or nodules on the skin and are mostly found on sun-exposed areas of the skin, such as the face, ears, and scalp. Jill Biden's case is a perfect example of how the sun's UV radiation may harm the susceptible skin around the eyes [1-2].

Research on BCC has focused on identifying risk factors for the disease's development and developing new treatment options. Studies have shown that exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or tanning beds is the primary risk factor for BCC. Other risk factors include fair skin, sunburns, and a family history of skin cancer. In terms of treatment, surgical excision is the most common and effective treatment for BCC. However, there is ongoing research on alternative treatment options, such as

topical medications, photodynamic therapy, and immunotherapy. Additionally, studies are being conducted using molecular markers to identify patients at high risk of recurrence after surgery who may benefit from additional treatment [3-5].

Studies have recently identified several genetic mutations commonly found in BCCs, including mutations in the PTCH1 and SMO genes. These findings have led to developing and clinically testing new targeted therapies against these genes [6].

Early detection of BCC is essential terms for several reasons:

- Early detection of BCC can improve patient outcomes by allowing for more timely and effective treatment. Compared to advanced-stage BCCs, early-stage BCCs are often less aggressive and have a lower risk of metastasis [7].
- By detecting BCC at an early stage, researchers can study the natural progression of the disease, which can help in understanding the underlying mechanisms of BCC development and progression.
- Early detection of BCC allows for the evaluation of new therapies in a more controlled and efficient manner. Early-stage BCCs are generally easier to treat than advanced-stage BCCs, requiring fewer resources and less evaluation time [8].

Overall, there is still much unknown about BCC's biology, and ongoing research is needed to improve the prevention and treatment of this common cancer. The Bidens are already prominent figures in the fight against cancer, especially after their son's death from glioblastoma. It is critical that Joe and Jill Biden use the momentum of their own skin cancer diagnoses to work with dermatologists to improve public health programs promoting sunscreen use and regular skin examinations [8].

Statements and Declarations

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