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Sun protection for preventing basal cell and squamous cell skin cancers

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Abstract

Background

'Keratinocyte cancer' is now the preferred term for the most commonly identified skin cancers basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma (cSCC), which were previously commonly categorised as non-melanoma skin cancers (NMSC). Keratinocyte cancer (KC) represents about 95% of malignant skin tumours. Lifestyle changes have led to increased exposure to the sun, which has, in turn, led to a significant increase of new cases of KC, with a worldwide annual incidence of between 3% and 8%. The successful use of preventive measures could mean a significant reduction in the resources used by health systems, compared with the high cost of the treatment of these conditions. At present, there is no information about the quality of the evidence for the use of these sun protection strategies with an assessment of their benefits and risks.

Objectives

To assess the effects of sun protection strategies (i.e. sunscreen and barrier methods) for preventing keratinocyte cancer (that is, basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma (cSCC) of the skin) in the general population.

Search methods

We searched the following databases up to May 2016: the Cochrane Skin Group Specialised Register, CENTRAL, MEDLINE, Embase, and LILACS. We also searched five trial registries and the bibliographies of included studies for further references to relevant trials.