



# MelNet update

20 April 2020

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We hope that you and your loved ones are keeping safe and coping well with the new way of life under COVID-19 lockdown.

Our streets are quiet, and businesses and schools are closed as we continue to isolate ourselves in our bubbles. But essential workers still leave their homes to keep us safe and keep us healthy. For this, we would like to say a heartfelt THANK YOU.

He waka eke noa. We are all in this together.

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## **Last chance to complete the MelNet membership survey | Your opinion is important to us**

Thank you to those who have completed the MelNet membership survey – we greatly appreciate your feedback. If you haven't yet, we'd love to hear your thoughts.

It has taken those who have responded on average less than 10 minutes to complete. We know you are busy, but we appreciate you taking this time to help guide the future direction of our organisation.

The survey will remain open until **Sunday 26 April 2020**.

By completing the survey, you can go in the draw to win a copy of Professor Cliff Rosendahl's latest book "Dermatoscopy and Skin Cancer: A Handbook for Hunters of Skin Cancer and Melanoma".

Thank you in advance for your input – we look forward to seeing your responses.

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## **Would you like to be part of a focus group? | We want to understand your needs even better**

We have received some **great** feedback from our membership survey and the responses keep rolling in. Based on what you've told us so far, there's still a few burning questions we'd like to ask to ensure we really understand your education and information needs, and how we can help you in your role as a skin cancer health professional.

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a 60-minute focus group to help unpack some of your comments. These will be held via Zoom throughout May and June.

If this sounds like something you'd be interested in helping us with, please contact [Katrina Patterson](#) for more information.

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## **Save the date: Melanoma Research and Therapy Special Interest Group**

**10.00 am – 1.00 pm**

**Friday 26 June 2020**

**To be held virtually via Zoom**

For health professionals and researchers with a special interest in melanoma research and therapy.

Topics on the (draft) agenda include:

- National melanoma immune checkpoint inhibitor database

*With presentations from Associate Professor Peter Gibbs (Royal Melbourne Hospital) and Alexander Dunn (Cancer Control Agency)*

- Melanoma Research: an update

Please RSVP to [Katrina Patterson](#) for details on how to connect to the meeting.

[More information about the group](#)

## Update on Skin Cancer Study Days for Nurses | Wellington cancelled, Auckland and Bay of Plenty TBC

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we made the difficult decision to cancel the Wellington Skin Cancer Study Day for Nurses which was scheduled to take place at Hutt Hospital on 29 May. We will decide whether to reschedule this day for later in the year once we have more certainty about what the coming months may bring. We will be sure to inform you of any updates as soon as we are able.

A decision will be made soon about the remaining study days in Auckland and Bay of Plenty.

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## Temporary PHARMAC changes to melanoma Special Authority criteria

PHARMAC has removed the specification of dose regimen and radiological monitoring from the Special Authority criteria for funded nivolumab and pembrolizumab.

This will make it easier for all patients to receive treatment at an extended dose interval and therefore reduce pressure on the healthcare system.

PHARMAC intends to revert to the original Special Authority criteria once health services have stabilised.

[More information](#)

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## MelNet's Givealittle page | Help us help you

**Thank you for the generous donations we have received so far!** We really appreciate your support - it will help us to continue to support you.

In the current environment, we rely more than ever on the generosity of others. If you, your colleagues or any of the patients you treat would like to give to a worthy cause, we would be grateful for any support you are able to provide.

The easiest way to donate is through our [Givealittle page](#). Your kindness will help us continue to advocate for improved melanoma prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment and research, and provide you with skin cancer education opportunities, information, research and best practice.

MelNet is registered with the IRD as a donee organisation so you can claim tax credits for donations of \$5 or more.

[Make a donation or share via social media](#)

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## One of our skin cancer superstars: Dr Sonja Bodley

MB ChB, FRNZCGP, Cert SCMS & Dermatoscopy, Adv Cert SCMS

Sonja specialises in the management of skin cancer and minor skin surgery. A qualified GP, she works with her local Lower Hutt practice seeing skin cancer surgery patients with a Community Services Card, as well as holding her own private clinic to help lessen the burden on secondary care.

“The contribution primary care makes to skin cancer prevention can be really significant but is often overlooked.” Determined to prove otherwise, Sonja is active in educating New Zealanders on the importance of skin cancer prevention and early detection.

In 2019, she organised a free skin check clinic in conjunction with SkinCan NZ, an event which saw over 100 people. This year she has spoken to seven school classes about staying safe in the sun, providing donated sunglasses and sunscreen to the students. She also organised a sun safety week with a local school who made over \$1000 selling sunscreen and held activities throughout the week, such as colouring competitions to help raise awareness.

But it doesn't stop there. Sonja regularly takes medical students and GP registrars into clinic and theatre so she can pass on her knowledge and help them develop their skills to diagnose and treat. She also runs a Facebook page where she posts helpful information about sun safety and skin health.

Thank you, Sonja, for the fantastic work you are doing to reduce the incidence and impact of melanoma in New Zealand.

[Let us know](#) what you're doing to support skin cancer prevention, early detection, treatment, care and research so we can share your initiatives and achievements with your colleagues around the country.



## HealthCert online courses and free trials

Now may be a great time to look into HealthCert's [online courses](#) in skin cancer medicine and dermoscopy. These courses are available anytime throughout the year and can therefore be commenced at a time that is convenient for you.

You can sample these online courses and pick up some valuable skills at the same time by completing [free online e-learning video modules](#).

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## Worth a read: Health economy of primary prevention versus early detection

Louisa Gordon has recently published an interesting paper in which she looks at the health economic effects of primary prevention versus early detection - which has the best outcomes?

She explains that the study arose because, in certain research and clinical circles in Australia there is a big push to invest in melanoma screening. "Here we argue primary prevention is the far better approach. More than ever, encouraging primary prevention is clearly the smarter option. Screening still has a role but only in smaller, targeted high-risk groups."

[Read the study](#)

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## In the news: The state of cancer prevention in Aotearoa New Zealand

This article argues that despite good evidence, New Zealand struggles to deliver effective cancer prevention. As a country we need to get serious about sun safety if we are to reduce our world leading rates of skin cancer. This requires central and local government leadership in promoting sun safety, shade provision and ensuring SunSmart policies abound.

[Read the article](#)

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## MelNet Facebook page

Welcome to our new followers!

If you're on Facebook, why not follow MelNet for interesting research and media stories, new resources, updates on our courses, and other melanoma and skin cancer related information that you may find useful.



[Join us on facebook](#)

[Follow us](#), stay informed and spread the word.

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## Upcoming events

The world has come to a standstill and as a result of COVID-19 many events have been cancelled or postponed. Events that are still scheduled to take place over the next weeks are closely monitored. While we try our best to update our website with the latest information, sometimes we're not able to do so as promptly as we would like. Therefore, we recommend contacting event organisers directly for any events you're interested in to be sure you have the most up to date information.

### May

#### Immuno-Oncology 2020 3rd World Congress 4 – 5 May 2020

Stockholm, Sweden - online event

[Further information](#)

#### ASCO20 Virtual Scientific Program 29 - 31 May 2020

[Further information](#)

### June

#### NZMA GP CME

11 – 14 June 2020

Rotorua (may be held as a virtual meeting)

[Further information](#)

#### Certificate of Skin Cancer Medicine and Certificate of Dermoscopy

13 - 14 June 2020

Perth, Australia

[Contact for more details](#)

[For more events see the MelNet events calendar](#)

## Recent MelNet website postings

Below is a selection of recent news postings on the MelNet website. Please visit the [website](#) to view all the latest news items.

[Primary prevention through daily use of sunscreen a priority for investment in control of melanoma](#)

[Aging does not seem to affect response to checkpoint inhibitors](#)

[Female survival advantage in cutaneous melanoma in contemporary patient cohort](#)

[High incidence of Merkel cell carcinoma and poor survival outcomes in NZ compared internationally](#)

[Norway: National UV and Skin Cancer Strategy](#)

[Canberra study: Many sun-safe hats for sale not meeting standards](#)

[European interdisciplinary experts release guideline on invasive squamous cell carcinoma: epidemiology, diagnostics and prevention](#)

[Introduction of new therapies for metastatic melanoma associated with significant mortality reduction in US](#)

[Advanced cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma \(A-cSCC\) associated with suboptimal initial management](#)

[Melanoma patients at 8% risk of second primary melanoma developing within 5 years](#)

[Increased intake of vitamin A associated with decreased risk of cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma](#)

[Site-specific response patterns, pseudoprogession, and acquired resistance in melanoma patients treated with ipilimumab combined with anti-PD-1 therapy](#)

[Teledermoscopy for Skin Cancer Prevention: GPs and specialised surgeons may equally be involved in prevention](#)

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