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Follow-up

Welcome to the second issue of **QSkin News**. We hope that you have had a good start to 2012. In this edition of **QSkin News** we would like to update you on the study's progress and findings, and inform you about our future plans.

David Whiteman and Catherine Olsen
Principal Investigators of QSkin

Recruitment update

We have now finished recruiting people into the QSkin Sun and Health Cohort – a monumental achievement in our first year. This process began in January of 2011, when we sent the first of 10 batches of letters to our fellow Queenslanders. In total, we invited 193,344 people into the study, of whom 43,794 agreed to join and completed the survey forms. Slightly more women than men are taking part, as is somewhat to be expected based on previous experiences! (23,874 women vs 19,920 men). A further 900 people have joined the study as volunteers. **The QSkin Study is now the largest study of skin cancer and melanoma in the world.** This has been made possible by the remarkable level of community support for research into skin cancer.



Queensland Institute of
Medical Research

Locked Bag 2000
Royal Brisbane Hospital
Herston, QLD 4029
Australia
1800 222 600
qskin@qimr.edu.au

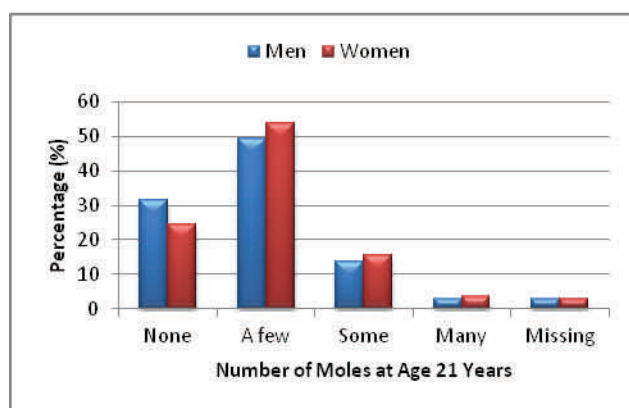
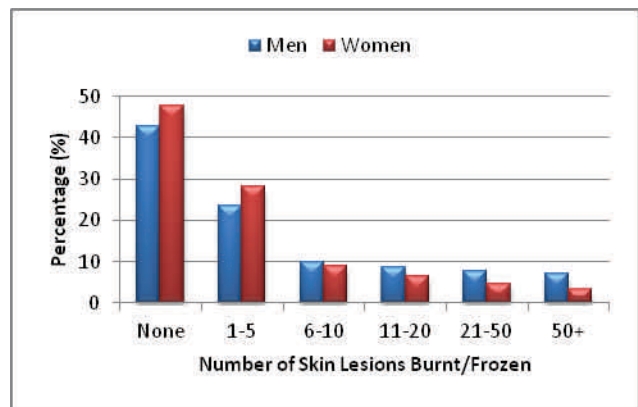
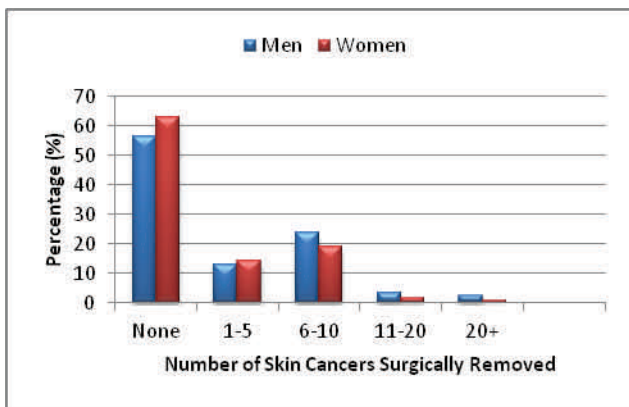
Early findings

In the weeks since the close of recruitment we have begun cleaning and analysing data from the survey and have started to write papers for publication. Publishing data is an extremely important part of the scientific process, and requires that all of our findings are subjected to rigorous review by other (very sceptical!) scientists before they can be released publicly. This process of peer review ensures that our scientific methods are described clearly, that the analyses are completed to the highest possible level and that we have correctly interpreted the

findings. This process is ongoing, but some interesting early observations from our preliminary analyses of the cohort are:

- Average age of participants: **56 years**
- **65%** get less than 8 hours of sleep per night (27.5% get less than 7 hours)
- **16%** felt that you were more likely to develop melanoma in the future than other Queenslanders
- **89%** rated your health as **good to excellent**, compared to other people

The following graphs are based on your responses in the QSkin Survey. They show the distribution (percentage of QSkin Participants) of answers to questions about moles, previous skin cancers and average level of stress.

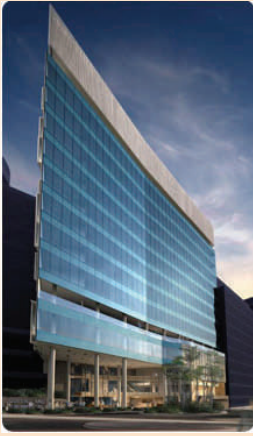


QSkin Quick Facts and Figures

- 44,694 participants
- About 420,000 documents have been **posted***
- 13% of surveys completed online
- 77 cartons of paper records (surveys and consent forms)
- 18.8 gigabytes of data storage for scanned surveys
- 16,626,168 items of data collected at baseline
-



***We are most keen to reduce postage. If you have received this newsletter by post, please email us at qskin@qimr.edu.au to receive future newsletters electronically.**



We are moving!

The QSkin Study team will be moving to QIMR's new building by mid 2012. The new building was made possible thanks to a generous gift from The Atlantic Philanthropies and funding from the Queensland and Federal Governments. This new centre will accommodate 20 new research laboratories and attract an additional 400 scientists and students, and will increase the Institute's research capacity in areas such as tropical diseases, vaccine development, cancer and genetics.

More information here:

www.qimr.edu.au/page/About_Us/Building_update_-_Smart_State_Medical_Research_Centre.

New Team Members

Bridie Thompson



I am completing a doctorate in cancer epidemiology and have more than ten years experience in researching cancer among Queenslanders. My role within **QSkin** will be to analyse the huge

volumes of data collected by the study. **QSkin** presents an exciting opportunity for me to work with a world class team of researchers and to play a role in helping prevent skin cancers in the future.

Padmini Subramaniam



I graduated in medicine and worked as a doctor for four years before completing Masters degrees of Science in Community Medicine and Clinical Science in Public Health. Keen to pursue research that aligned with my interests in

public health and clinical medicine, I was delighted to be offered a prestigious scholarship to undertake a PhD within **QSkin**. My doctoral project will assess the incidence, risk factors, treatment practices and costs associated with non-melanoma skin cancers. Subsequently, I aim to develop a tool to help doctors assess a person's risk of developing skin cancer in the future.

Sub-studies within QSkin

From time to time we will be contacting small groups of **QSkin** participants to invite them to take part in sub-studies to address specific research questions. Taking part in a sub-study is always completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time.

Validating our survey instrument

A key challenge for all research projects is to ensure that our measures are valid. To test the validity of the **QSkin** survey, we asked a group of participants to fill in the survey form a second time, and also have their skin examined by a doctor. The purpose was to see how well the questions on the **QSkin** survey form captured information about risk factors for skin cancer. We are pleased to report that most of the questions are reliable; that is, people gave the same answers on both occasions. This is a good thing!

However, it was clear that most people found it difficult to count the number of moles on their skin. But while the exact counts were not perfectly recorded, our validation study showed that participants were very good at placing themselves into groups of 'none', 'few', 'some' or 'many' moles. These validation activities may seem a bit dry and academic, but they are crucially important. We need to be sure which are the best measures. In that way, we will arrive at the correct answers in our future analyses.



The next 12 months

Our first task for 2012 is to complete the baseline data analyses to describe the important features of the study cohort. We are also preparing to link the dataset to the Queensland Cancer Registry to determine how many people have been previously diagnosed with melanoma or another cancer. Soon, we will also be linking our dataset to the records of Medicare Australia to understand how many people

have been diagnosed with and treated for skin cancers, sunspots and similar skin conditions.

Later in the year, we will be applying for new project funding to enable us to obtain genetic information. If successful, we will invite each member of QSkin to provide a saliva sample. These samples will contain all of the genetic materials necessary for us to see how genes vary for different people, and how this might be related to risk of skin cancer.

More details to follow!

Medicare consent

As you know, skin cancers are a very serious health problem in Queensland, but surprisingly little is known about exactly how much it costs to treat these diseases across the entire population. A key strength of QSkin is our ability to measure the burden of skin cancer. To do this, we have asked for your consent to obtain relevant information from Medicare. Your consent will allow us to collect information about any services you may have in the future to do with your skin, for example, services relating to the treatment of sun spots or skin checks.

We are in the process of re-contacting a group of QSkin Participants who did not sign the Medicare consent form, or who forgot to include their Medicare number. So far we have had a very good response. Thank you for your assistance in this important matter!



Feedback?

If you have any comments or updated information (e.g. change of address), please contact us:

Tel: 1800 222 600 Email: qskin@qimr.edu.au Web: www.qskin.qimr.edu.au

We wish to send future newsletters by email. If you have received this newsletter by post, please [email us](mailto:qskin@qimr.edu.au) with your contact details.



Queensland Institute of
Medical Research

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