AB172. 16. A systematic review of sentinel lymph node biopsy in cutaneous melanoma

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Background: Cutaneous melanoma is the 15th most common cancer worldwide. Ireland has the 4th highest incidence rate in Europe in women and the 8th highest incidence rate in men. Sentinel lymph node biopsy (SLNB) is an essential part of the melanoma staging process for intermediate and thick melanomas, however, the exact survival benefit is unclear. As part of this systematic review we wish to assess the literature regarding SLNB in cutaneous melanoma patients, specifically relating to survival benefit.

Methods: A systematic literature search was carried out using online databases PubMed, Science Direct and CINAHL. Studies were assessed using a three-stage process to assess the eligibility of each study for inclusion in this systematic review of the literature.

Results: The University of Sheffield Checklist for Critical Appraisal was used to review 13 studies. The 13 studies were assessed under three main themes: SLNB versus observation, survival difference between SLNB positive versus SLNB negative results and SLNB in thin melanoma.

Conclusions: Current research suggests that there is a significant improvement in overall survival, melanoma specific survival and recurrence-free survival in patients who have negative SLNB results compared to positive SLNB results. Research suggests that there is a significant survival benefit in patients who undergo SLNB compared to those who undergo observation alone and in patients with thin melanoma who undergo SLNB. However, there is a paucity of research in this area and further research is required to assess both in more detail.

Keywords: Melanoma; sentinel; node; biopsy