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PSYCHOLOGICAL CARE FOR PEOPLE AT HIGH RISK OF MELANOMA: DEVELOPMENT AND PILOT TESTING OF A PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

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Aim: The aim of this study was to develop and pilot test a psycho-educational intervention to address the supportive care needs of people at very high risk of developing melanoma. The intervention aimed to improve patient understanding of melanoma risk, and promote healthy psychological, social and behavioural adjustment, as well as improve doctor-patient communication, following melanoma diagnosis.

Methods: The content of this intervention was developed using an iterative process based on: (a) extensive consultation with expert researchers and clinicians from a range of disciplines; (b) a 10-year history of work by our group with people at high risk of developing melanoma; and (c) the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping. The process of intervention development was undertaken in accordance with the NH&MRC guidelines on 'How to present the evidence for consumers', and the Medical Research Council guidelines on developing complex interventions.

Results: The intervention has been evaluated by 30 melanoma survivors (15 at high risk, and 15 at moderate risk, of developing melanoma) and 10 health care professionals (dermatologists, psychologists, nurses, GPs). All participants were asked to complete a questionnaire assessing the acceptability, relevance, and comprehensibility of the resource, as well as the quality, quantity and balance of information presented. In addition, melanoma patients were asked to complete measures of psychological distress, melanoma-related knowledge, perceived risk, and unmet supportive care needs. Data analyses are currently being undertaken and will be reported at the meeting.

Conclusion: This Phase II trial will provide preliminary data on intervention acceptance, feasibility, and psychological efficacy in preparation for a larger randomised controlled trial to begin in 2013.