

RESEARCH

Public Perspectives on Skin Cancer Treatment and Patient Choice

Abstract This study explores public perspectives on nonmelanoma skin cancer (NMSC), focusing on patient concerns, screening behaviors, and treatment preferences. A survey of 1,152 respondents—1,025 with direct or familial experience with skin cancer and 127 without—was conducted via online channels in March–April 2026. Results show that individuals with prior skin cancer experience are significantly more likely to engage in regular dermatologic screening, with visit frequency increasing with age, education level, and insurance coverage. Overall concern about skin cancer is high, particularly among those previously diagnosed and older populations. When evaluating treatment options, respondents prioritized cure rate, avoidance of surgery, cosmetic outcomes, and insurance coverage, while physician recommendation ranked lower. A strong preference emerged for having multiple treatment options, including both surgical and nonsurgical approaches, with most patients favoring nonsurgical treatments when outcomes are comparable. Additionally, respondents expressed overwhelming concern about insurance limitations and emphasized that treatment decisions should be driven by patients and physicians rather than insurers or external entities. These findings highlight the importance of patient autonomy, access to diverse treatment options, and alignment between clinical decision-making and patient priorities in dermatologic oncology.

Objective: To evaluate how patient concerns about skin cancer relate to screening behavior and to identify the factors that most influence treatment decision-making among individuals with and without experience with nonmelanoma skin cancer.

Background: GentleCure by SkinCure Oncology conducted this study to better understand how patient concerns about skin cancer relate to health behaviors, such as the frequency of skin examinations, and to identify the factors that most influence treatment decision-making. In March and April 2026, a total of 1,152 respondents, including 1,025 individuals with direct or familial experience with nonmelanoma skin cancer and 127 without such experience, shared their perspectives on skin cancer, screening habits, and treatment preferences. The survey aimed to provide insight into how patients perceive risk, engage with care, and prioritize different aspects of available treatment options.

Methods A cross-sectional survey was developed and administered via SurveyMonkey. Participants were recruited through email campaigns, social media channels, and links on the patient education website GentleCure.com. The survey collected data on respondents' experiences with skin cancer, screening behaviors, levels of concern, and treatment preferences.

Limitations Survey recruitment was conducted primarily through social media channels and the GentleCure.com website, which tends to attract individuals actively exploring alternatives to Mohs surgery. As a result, the sample may not be fully representative of

the broader population of approximately 4.7 million Americans diagnosed annually with nonmelanoma skin cancer.¹

Conflicts The author is employed by SkinCure Oncology, a company that supports dermatology practices in the use of image-guided superficial radiation therapy (SRT). While this affiliation is acknowledged, the study was conducted to better understand patient perspectives on skin cancer and its treatment, not to promote any specific treatment modality.

Keywords Nonmelanoma skin cancer (NMSC); skin cancer treatment; patient preferences; treatment decision-making; nonsurgical skin cancer treatment; Mohs surgery alternatives; patient perception; dermatology care; skin cancer screening; health behavior

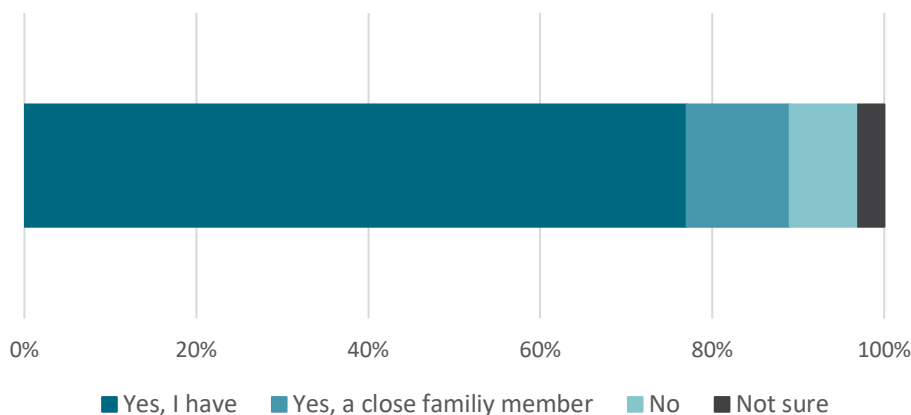
¹ Based on growth projections following the most widely cited U.S. incidence study (Rogers et al., JAMA Dermatology, 2015)

Population

Of 1,152 people participating in the survey, 1,025 indicated that they or a close family member experienced a skin cancer diagnosis.

Survey population

Have you or a family member ever been diagnosed with nonmelanoma skin cancer?



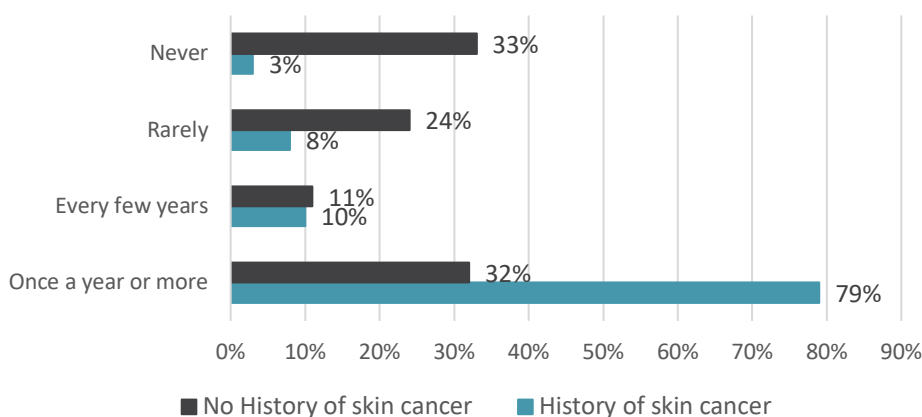
1,025 or 89% of survey respondents said that they or a close family member had a skin cancer diagnosis. 127 or 11% said they either have not had to, or were unsure if they ever had to, deal with a skin cancer diagnosis.

The intent of this question was not to determine the percentage of the population dealing with a skin cancer diagnosis, but rather to segment respondents into two categories: those having had to deal with a diagnosis and those who have not.

Visiting the Dermatologist

79% of those who have experienced a skin cancer diagnosis visited a dermatologist at least once a year. Of those who have never experienced a skin cancer diagnosis, only 32% visit a dermatologist at least once a year.

How often do you visit a dermatologist for a skin exam or other skin concerns?

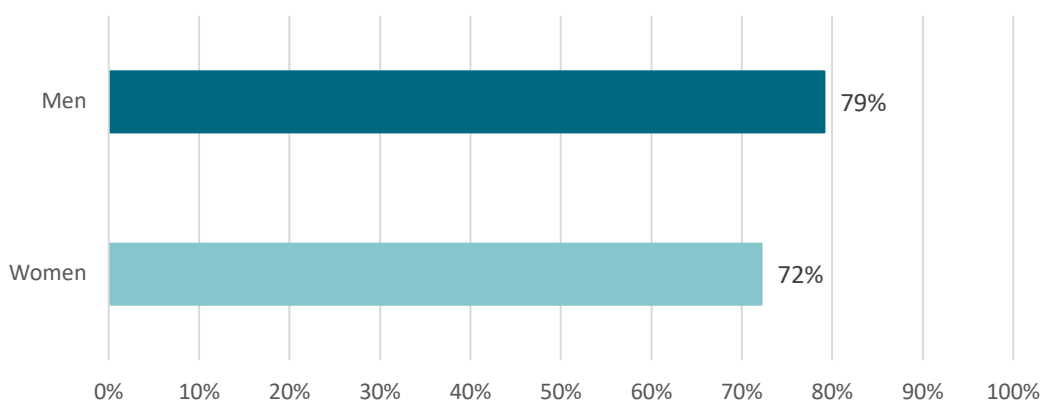


People who have experienced a skin cancer diagnosis are far more likely to visit a dermatologist on a regular basis.

Does gender influence the likelihood of visiting a dermatologist at least once a year?

Going into the survey, we thought women might be more likely than men to visit a dermatologist regularly for a skin exam. 79% of male respondents with a history of skin cancer visited a dermatologist at least once a year, compared to 72% of female respondents.

Of those with skin cancer history, are women more likely to visit a dermatologist at least once per year?

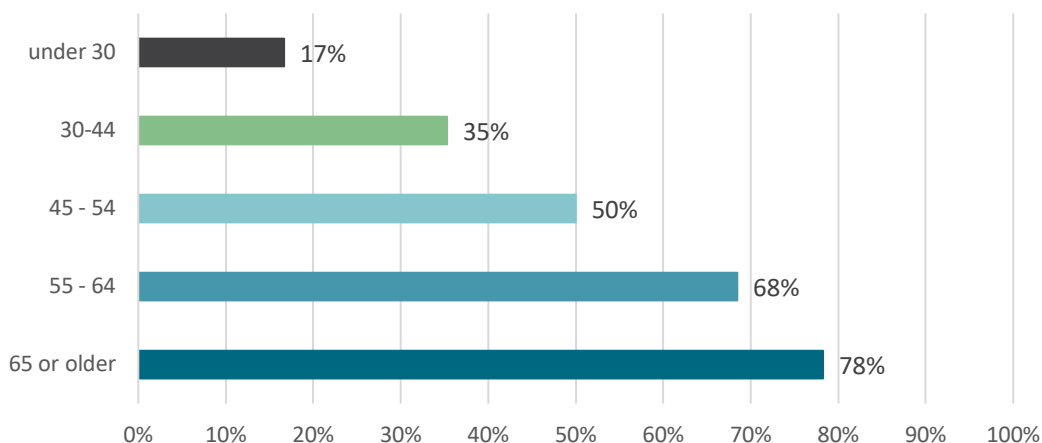


Of those who have had an experience with skin cancer, men were more likely than women to make annual visits to the dermatologist.

Does age influence the likelihood of visiting a dermatologist at least once a year?

The likelihood of visiting a dermatologist for skin cancer screening increases with age. Of those with a previous skin cancer diagnosis, those 55 and older were almost twice as likely to get an annual skin check (77% of those 55 and older vs 42% for those 54 and younger).

The influence of age on frequency of derm visits

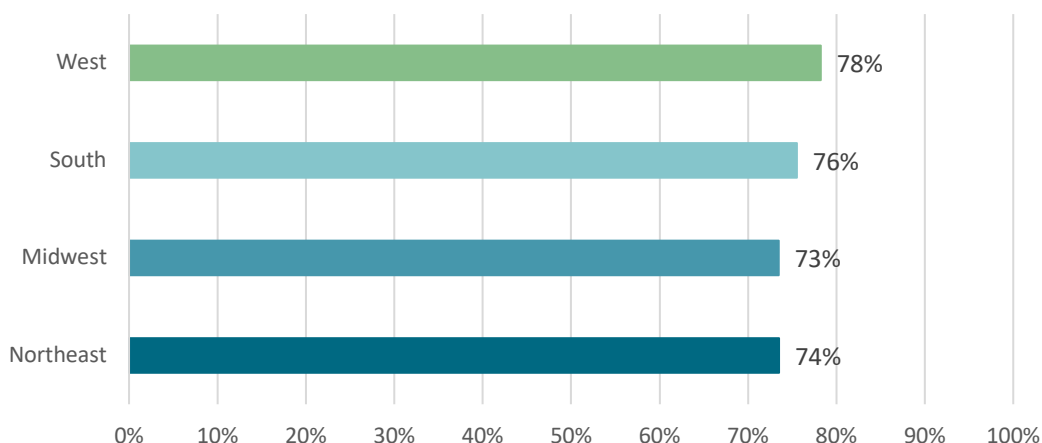


Older respondents with a history of skin cancer were more likely to visit a dermatologist at least once a year.

Does geography influence the likelihood of visiting a dermatologist at least once a year?

Respondents from different parts of the country were equally likely to visit a dermatologist at least once a year.

The influence of geography on frequency of derm visits

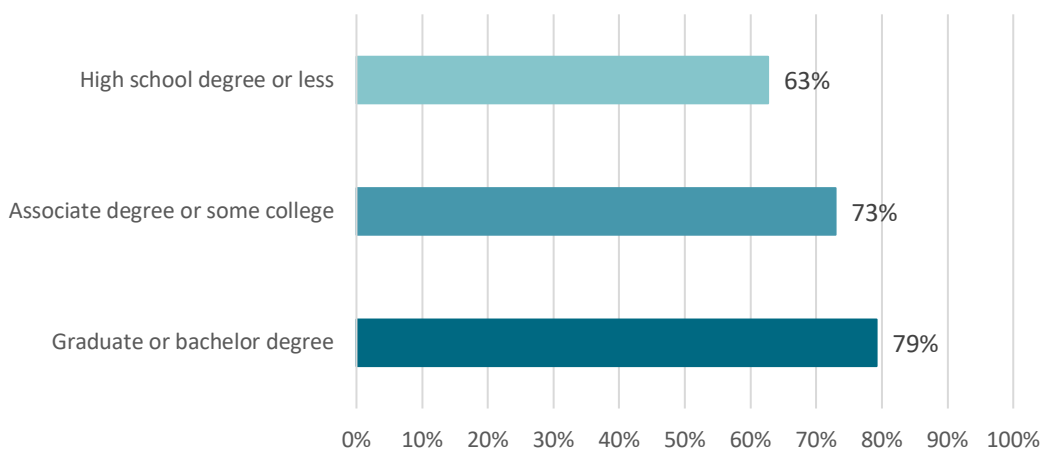


The likelihood of visiting a dermatologist at least once a year was not influenced by the patient's geographic location.

Does education influence the likelihood of visiting a dermatologist at least once a year?

Respondents with a higher level of educational achievement were more likely to visit a dermatologist at least once a year.

The influence of education on frequency of derm visits



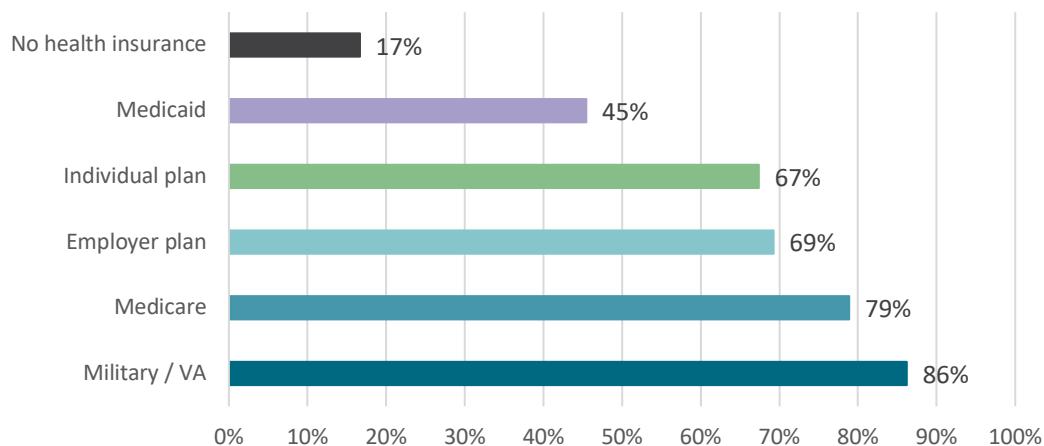
Education level influences the likelihood of visiting a dermatologist regularly.

Further study is needed to determine if the level of education directly influences behavior. It may be that those with higher education have better access to care due to their financial situation or health insurance status.

Does health insurance influence the likelihood of visiting a dermatologist at least once a year?

Health insurance influences behavior. Those with Military / VA or Medicare coverage were most likely to visit a dermatologist at least once a year, followed by those with commercial insurance. Those with Medicaid or no insurance were least likely to visit a dermatologist regularly.

The influence of insurance on frequency of dermatologist visits

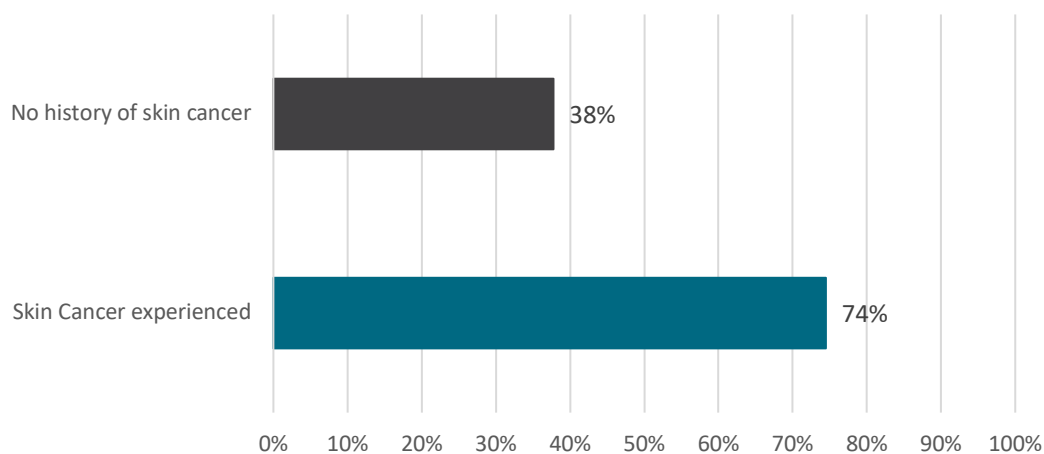


Health insurance coverage influences the decision to visit a dermatologist regularly.

People are concerned about skin cancer

Those who have experience with a skin cancer diagnosis are almost twice as likely to be concerned about skin cancer. Even those who have never experienced a skin cancer diagnosis are concerned. More than one in three without a skin cancer history said they were either “extremely concerned” or “very concerned”.

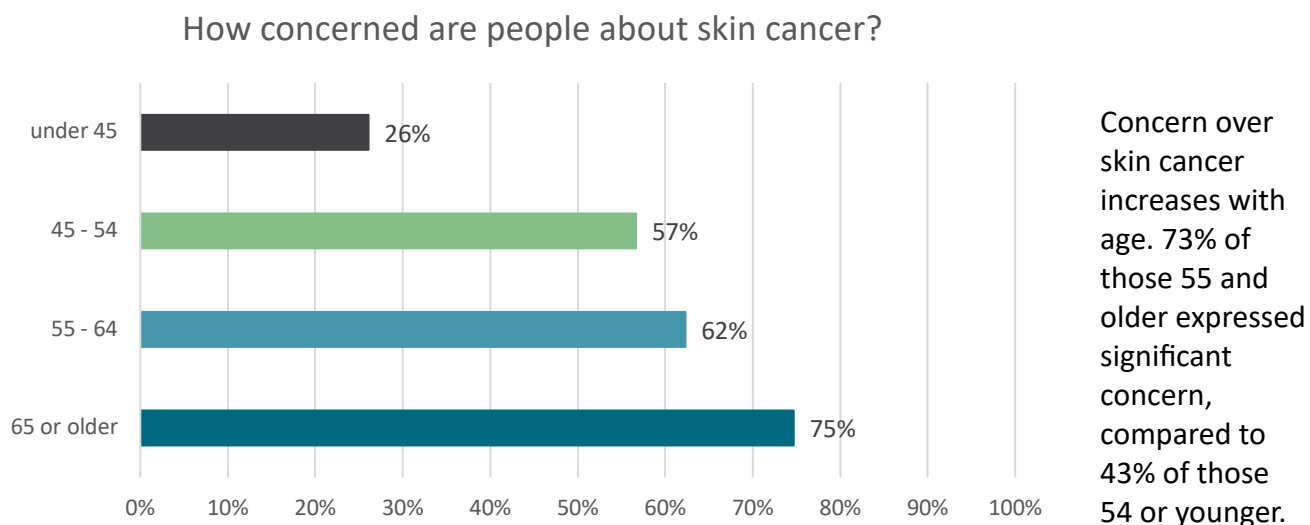
How concerned are people about skin cancer?



Almost 3 out of four people diagnosed with skin cancer are concerned about skin cancer.

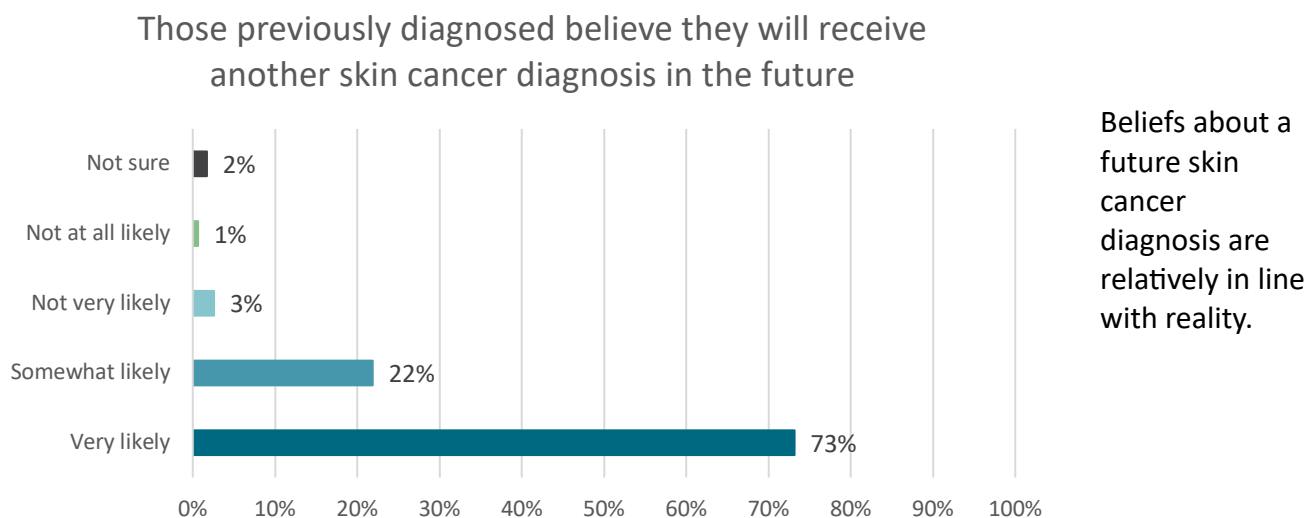
Does age influence the likelihood of concern over skin cancer?

Those 65 and older were most concerned about skin cancer, with 75% of respondents indicating that they were either “extremely concerned” or “very concerned”.



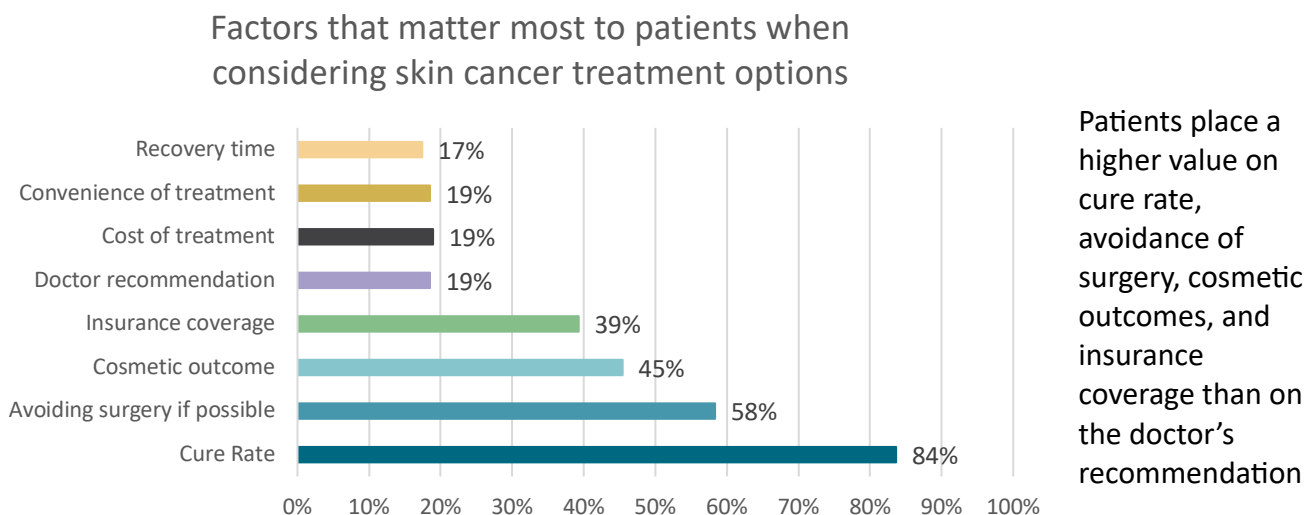
What is the perceived likelihood of receiving a skin cancer diagnosis?

One in five Americans will receive a skin cancer diagnosis in their lifetime. Having one skin cancer significantly increases the risk of developing another. In fact, there is a 35–50% chance of another within 5 years and 50–60% chance within 10 years.



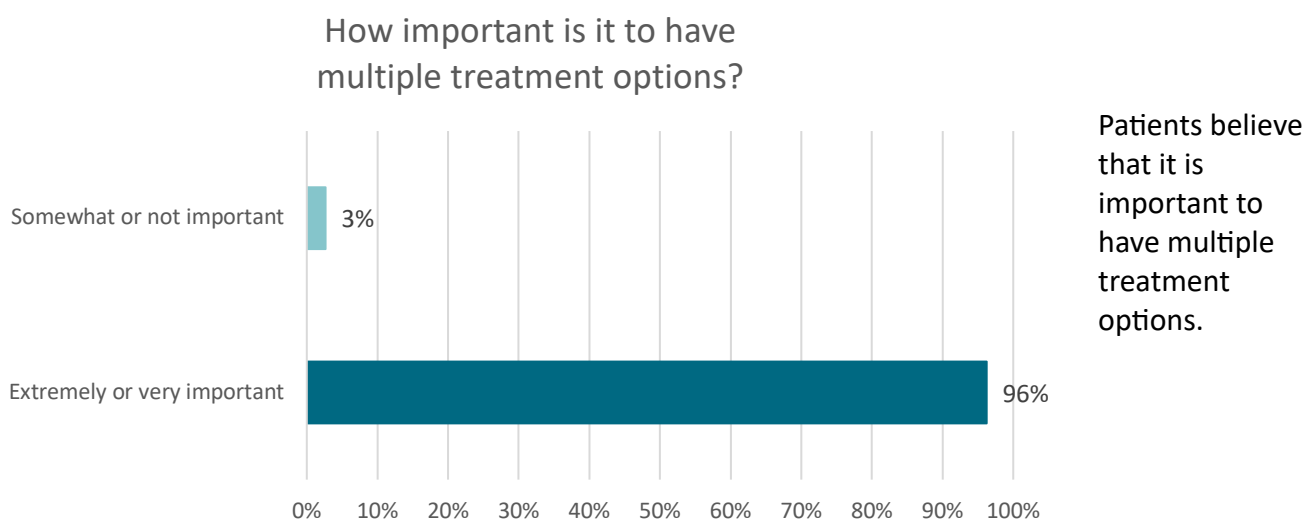
What matters most to patients when considering treatment options for nonmelanoma skin cancer?

Survey respondents were asked to select the three things that mattered most when choosing a skin cancer treatment option. The cure rate was considered by far one of the most important factors. Avoiding surgery was also considered important by more than half of the respondents. Cosmetic results and insurance considerations were also named in the top four considerations. Interestingly, fewer than one in five respondents considered the doctor's recommendation highly important.

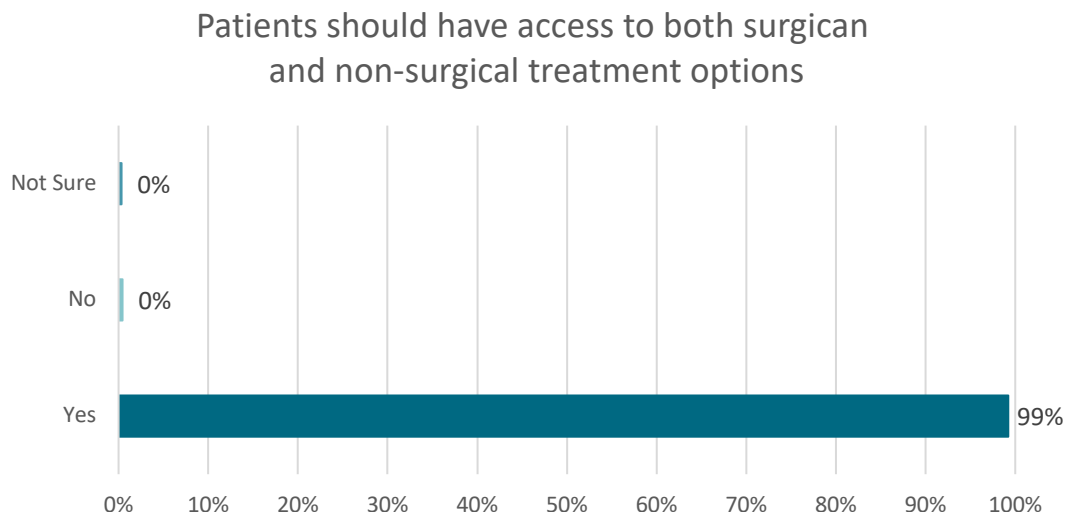


How important is it for patients to have multiple treatment options available for skin cancer?

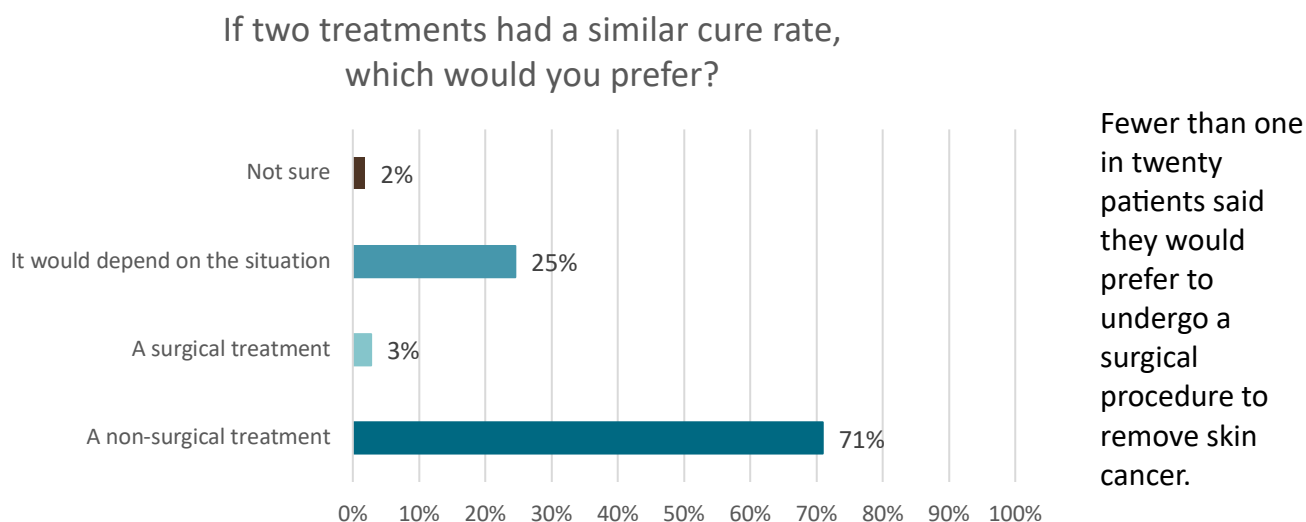
Patients believe they should be given more than one treatment option.



Do patients believe that they should have access to both surgical and nonsurgical treatment options?
Patients believe they should have both surgical and nonsurgical treatment options available.

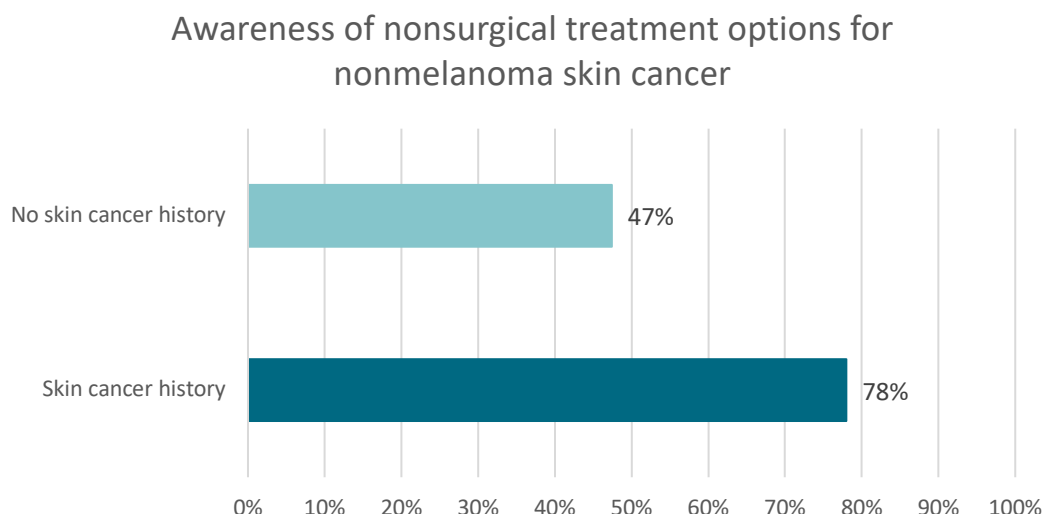


If two treatments for skin cancer had similar cure rates, which would patients prefer?
Despite patients wanting treatment options to choose from, including both surgical and nonsurgical options, when cure rates are equivalent, patient choice is clear. Patients prefer non-surgical solutions.



Awareness of alternatives to surgery

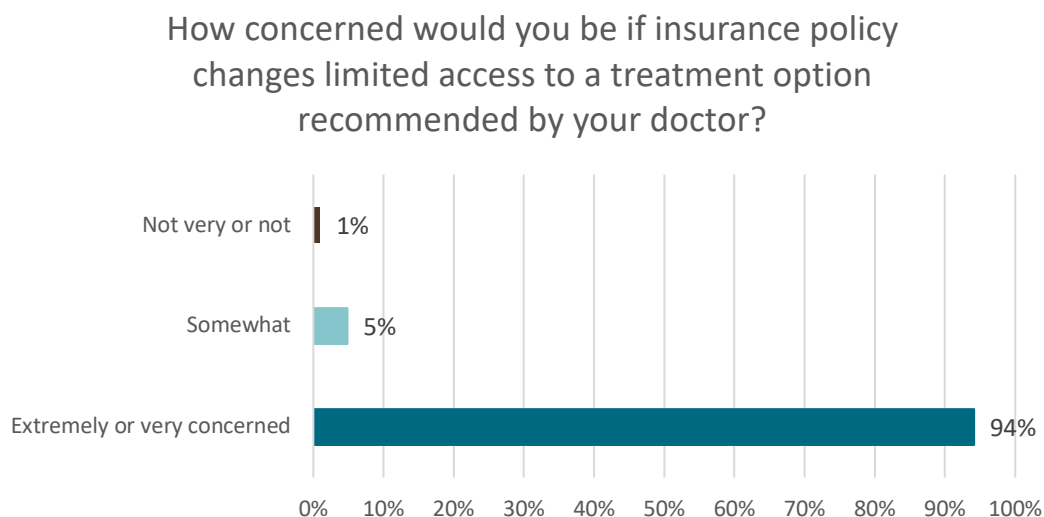
People with a skin cancer history are far more likely to know about alternatives to surgery than those who have no history of skin cancer.



8 out of 10 survey respondents with a history of skin cancer are aware of alternatives to surgery.

Concern that insurance policy changes might limit access to a recommended treatment option

94% of survey respondents with a history of skin cancer would be extremely or very concerned if insurance policy changes limited access to a treatment option recommended by their doctor.

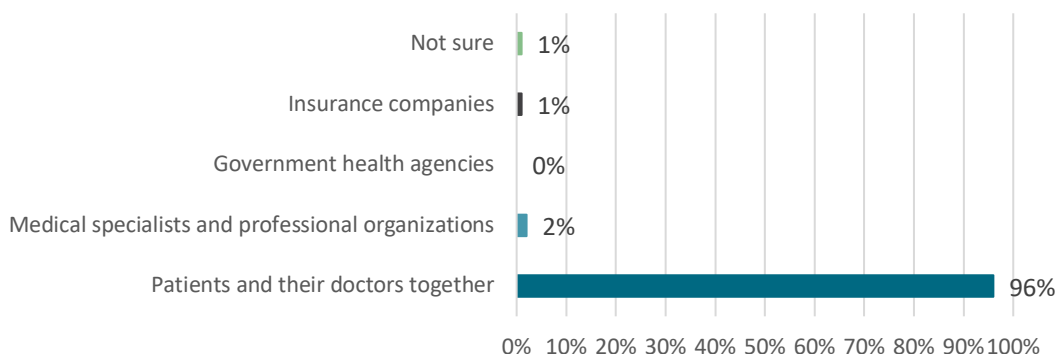


People are concerned that their health insurance may limit access to a recommended treatment.

Who should have the greatest influence over treatment decisions?

Respondents were nearly unanimous in their opinion that treatment decisions should be made by patients and their doctors, not medical specialists, professional organizations, government agencies, or health insurance companies.

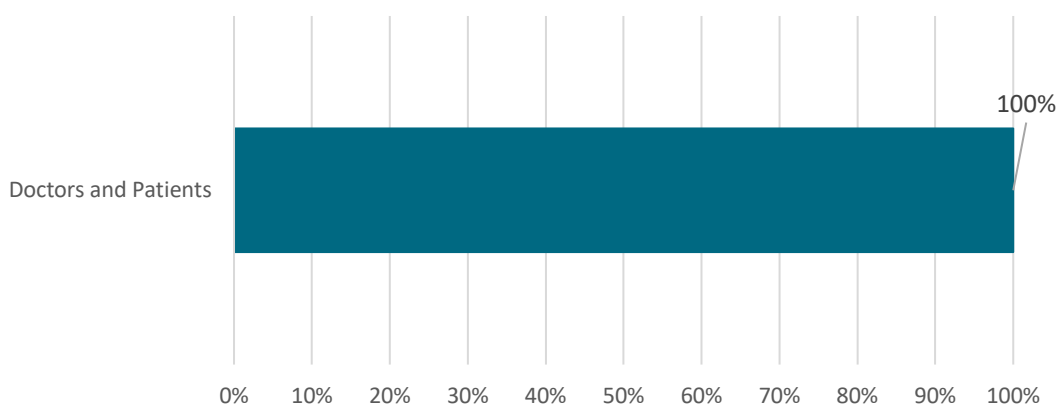
Who should have the greatest influence when deciding which treatment options are available to patients with skin cancer?



Patients want control over treatment decisions and want to work directly with their doctor.

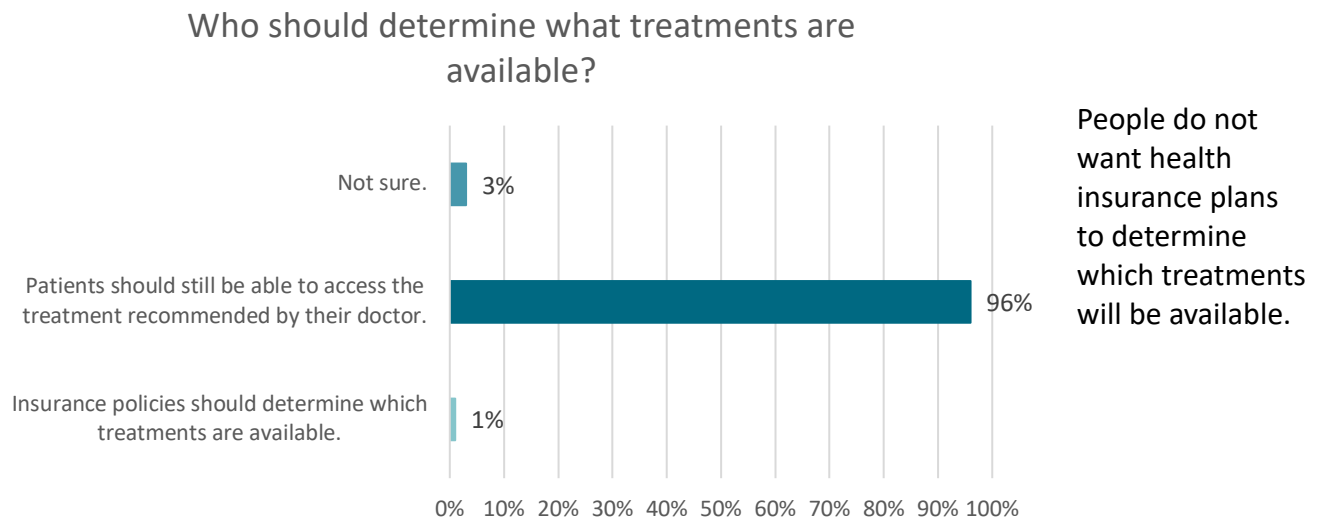
There was virtually universal agreement with the statement “Doctors and patients should have broad freedom to choose among appropriate skin cancer treatments.”

Doctors and patients should have broad freedom to choose among appropriate skin cancer treatments.



Doctors and patients should have broad freedom to select the best treatment option.

Only 1% of respondents believed that health insurance companies should determine which treatment options are available.



ABOUT THIS SURVEY

On March 18, 2026, GentleCure by SkinCure Oncology launched the survey “Public Perspectives on Skin Cancer Treatment and Patient Choice”. The results above reflect survey results through April 22, 2026. The survey can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TPGNPWR>.

Questions about the survey should be addressed to: aLefton@SkinCureOncology.com.