



## **Breast Cancer and Melanoma: A New Warning**

October is breast cancer awareness month and we couldn't think of a better time to tell you about the possible association between breast cancer and melanoma.

Having had breast cancer or melanoma (a deadly form of skin cancer) can raise the odds of developing the other, the Skin Cancer Foundation (2010) reports. Many previous studies have noted associations between the two malignancies, however a study published in the *Irish Journal of Medical Science* is the first to recommend the monitoring of breast cancer patients for signs of melanoma, and melanoma patients for signs of breast cancer. This study also recommends regular mammographies or breast MRIs for melanoma patients with a family history of breast cancer.

The study examined 6,788 cases of melanoma and 27,597 cases of breast carcinoma between 1994 and 2007. The patients were selected from the Ireland National Cancer Registry. Through mathematics and statistical analysis the investigators expected to have found 30-35 patients with both malignancies if there was no statistical significant relationship. Instead 127 patients were identified as having both malignancies. Understanding that patients with melanoma or other skin cancers are already at higher risk for developing other malignancies, Gillian M. Murphy, MD from Beaumont Hospital in Dublin commented, “this is about a fourfold increase, which raises the possibility of a genetic predisposition linking the two cancers”.

In the *Dermatology Online Journal* (2008), Seltzer and Leachman corroborate the findings and recommendations of the above mentioned study. This study further suggests that patients with either malignancy be screened for the other related to current findings suggesting Genetic links within the pedigrees of patients with breast cancer and melanoma (Seltzer and Leachman, 2008). Journals such as the *Annals of Oncology and Breast Cancer Research and Treatment* and *The International Journal of Cancer*

reported breast cancer patients having between 1.4 and 2.7 times the risk of developing melanoma, as well as the reciprocal danger of female melanoma patients having a 1.4 times greater chance of developing breast cancer.



At your next visit, the physicians and advanced practice providers here at Water's Edge Dermatology encourage you to let us know of any related personal or familial history of related illnesses. The more we know about your history, the better we can diagnose and treat. Please visit us at [wederm.com](http://wederm.com) for a list of locations, contact information and our provider profiles. Make your appointment today.



Important Links:

American Cancer Society cancer screening guidelines:

<http://www.cancer.org/Healthy/FindCancerEarly/CancerScreeningGuidelines/american-cancer-society-guidelines-for-the-early-detection-of-cancer>

Mayo clinic link describing symptoms of Melanoma:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/melanoma/DS00439/DSECTION=symptoms>

Visit this link to discover a collection of original articles related to Breast cancer and Melanoma.

<http://search.yahoo.com/searchpad/shared/e49dd46bc81b8c266b823c33a2e4e3a9>