

9 Cancer of the skin—melanoma

Summary

Relative survival after diagnosis of melanoma of the skin is very high when compared with other cancer sites. For those cancers diagnosed in 1992–1997, relative survival one year after diagnosis of melanoma of the skin was 96.9% for males and 98.6% for females. Five years after diagnosis relative survival was 90.0% for males and 94.6% for females (Table 9.1). Relative survival ten years after diagnosis was 84.5% for males and 92.0% for females in 1987–1991, the most recent period for which ten-year relative survival data are available (Figure 9.2; Tables 9.2 and 9.3).

Relative survival after a diagnosis of melanoma increased significantly between 1982–1986 and 1992–1997. One-year relative survival increased by 2.4 percentage points for males and 1.9 percentage points for females, and five-year relative survival increased 7.0 percentage points for males and 3.7 percentage points for females (Figure 9.2; Tables 9.2 and 9.3).

Relative survival after melanoma was consistently high for all age groups. Five-year relative survival was over 90% for males in all age groups under 50–59 years, and for females in all age groups under 70–79 years. There was a decline in the oldest age group, with five-year relative survival in the 90–99 age group 51.5% for males and 88.1% for females (Figure 9.3; Table 9.1).

For individual age groups, five-year relative survival increased significantly for males and females for most age groups between 1982–1986 and 1992–1997 (Figure 9.3; Tables 9.5 and 9.6).

Table 9.1: Melanoma of the skin: number of new cases and deaths, and five-year relative survival proportions, by age at diagnosis and sex, Australia, 1992–1997

Age	New cases		Deaths		5-year relative survival (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
0–19 years	317	329	13	12	96.6	96.6
20–29 years	1,302	1,553	69	32	95.5	98.4
30–39 years	2,328	2,899	167	108	93.2	96.6
40–49 years	3,741	3,642	339	180	92.3	95.9
50–59 years	4,297	3,171	515	220	91.7	95.6
60–69 years	5,266	3,319	1,090	417	89.1	93.1
70–79 years	4,864	2,952	1,731	656	84.7	92.3
80–89 years	1,779	1,496	1,004	735	82.3	83.9
90–99 years	166	221	130	153	51.5	88.1
All ages	24,060	19,582	5,058	2,513	90.0	94.6

Incidence and mortality

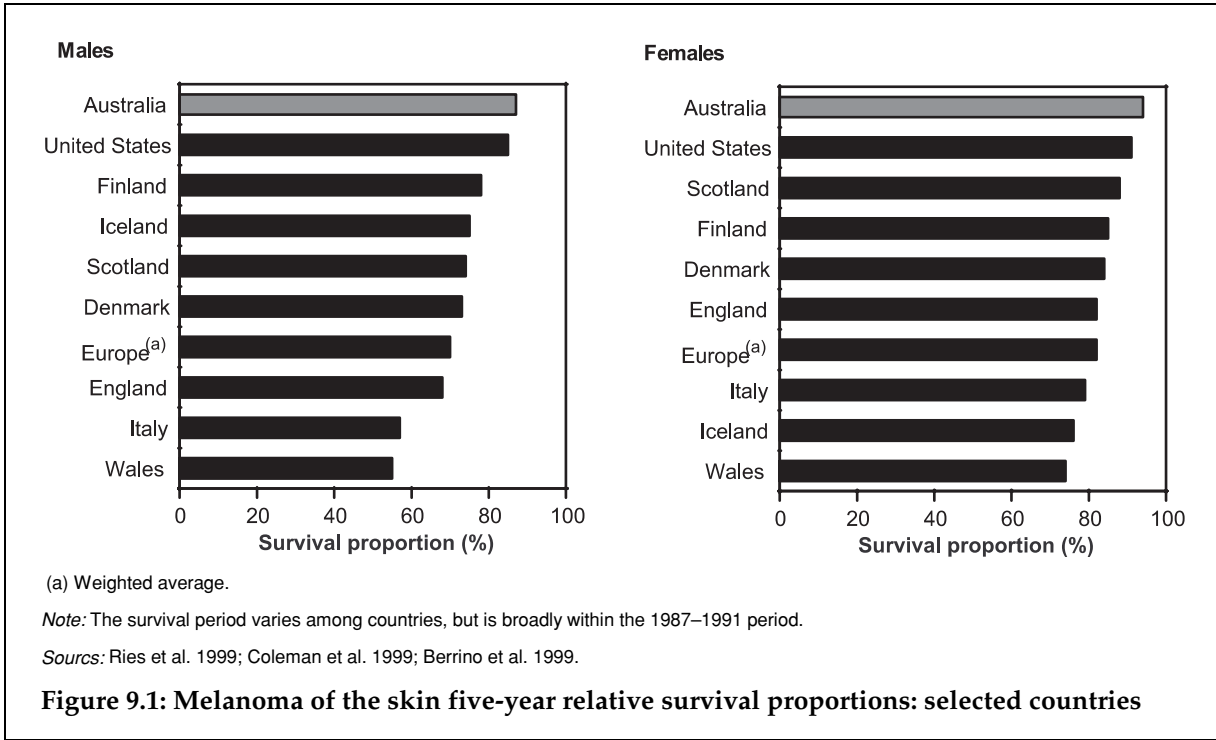
In 1997, there were 8,378 new cases of melanoma diagnosed. Of these, 4,658 were males and 3,720 were females.

In 1997, 580 males and 330 females died from melanoma. It is estimated that, in 1997, 6,700 years of life were lost in males and 4,400 years of life were lost in females before the age of 75 due to melanoma.

For the six-year period 1992–1997, age-standardised incidence rates for melanoma increased by 3.4% per annum for males and 2.6% per annum for females. Age-standardised mortality rates decreased slightly by 0.9% per annum for males and 1.1% per annum for females.

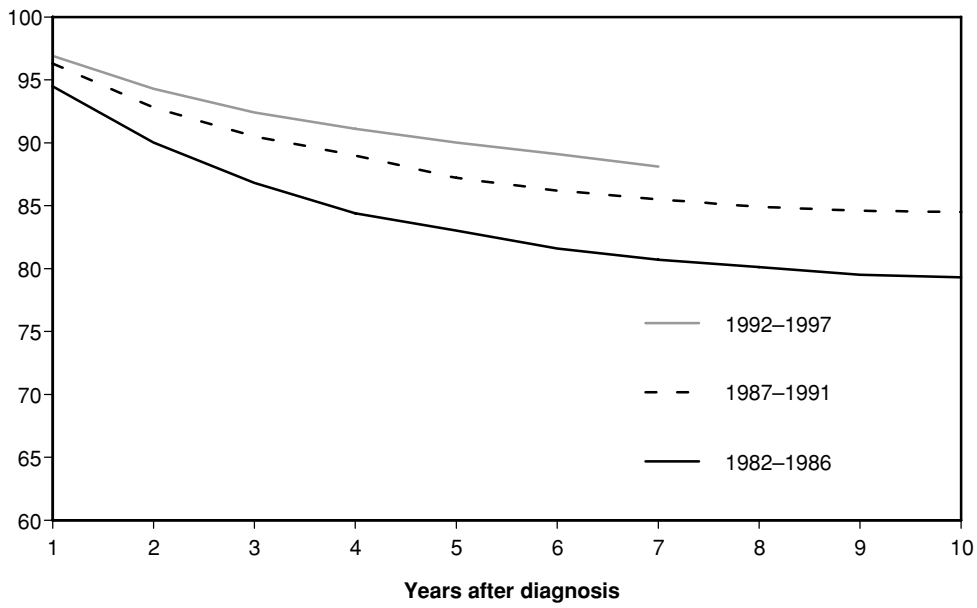
International comparisons

Australian males and females are ranked first for five-year relative survival after a diagnosis of melanoma of the skin when compared with the other countries for which relative survival information is available.



Males

Relative survival (%)



Females

Relative survival (%)

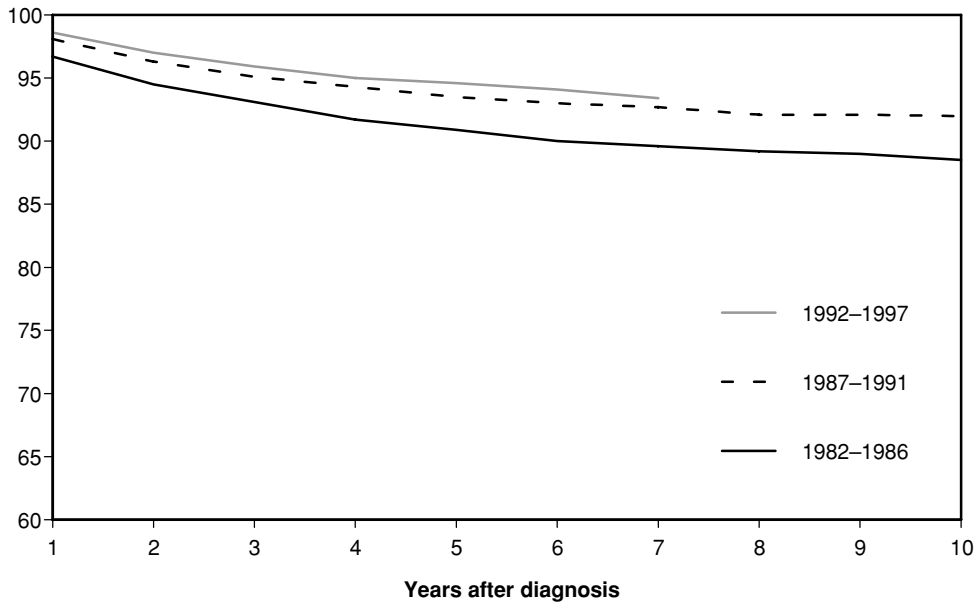
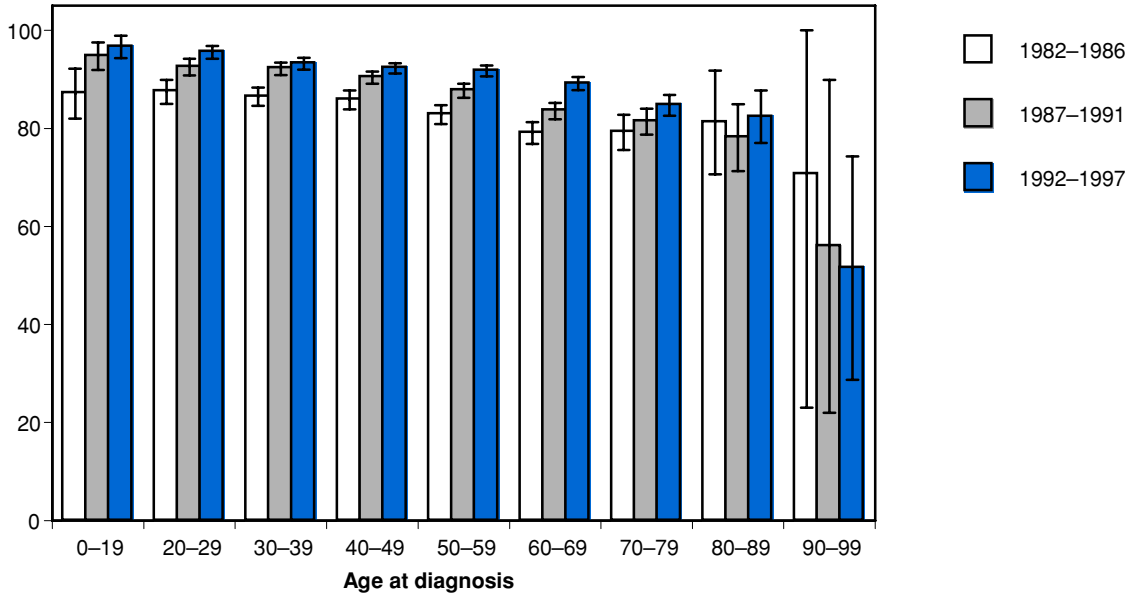


Figure 9.2: Melanoma of the skin relative survival proportions: period of diagnosis, Australia

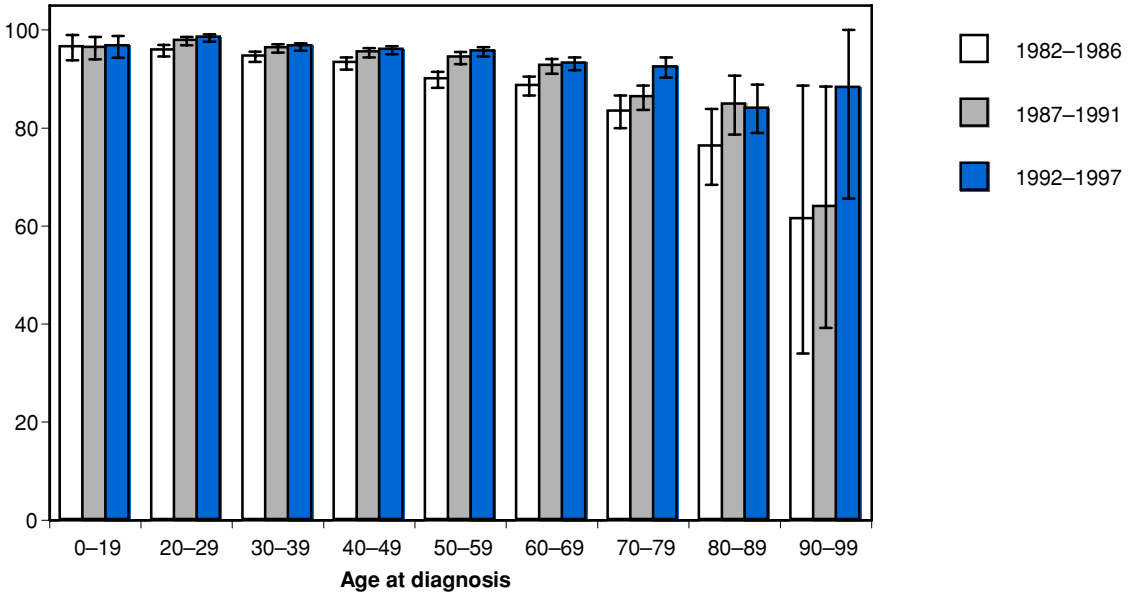
Males

Survival proportion (%)



Females

Survival proportion (%)



Note: 95% confidence intervals are shown for each age group.

Figure 9.3: Melanoma of the skin five-year relative survival proportions: age at diagnosis by period of diagnosis, Australia