



Niacinamide

500 mg twice daily

The use of Niacinamide (also known as nicotinamide), a form of vitamin B3, was found to reduce the incidence of basal cell skin cancers by 23% among a group of high-risk patients, according to the results of the Australian ONTRAC study at the 2015 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting.

“Obviously we still need to use sunscreen and other skin cancer prevention strategies, but we now have an additional exciting opportunity for affordable skin cancer prevention, which we can instantly translate into clinical practice,” said Diona Damian, MBBS, PhD, a professor of dermatology at the University of Sydney Australia, noting that the use of nicotinamide is recommended for high-risk patients and not for the general population.

The ONTRAC study included 386 high-risk patients defined as people who had at least two skin cancers in the last 5 years (average of 8). Patients were randomly assigned to nicotinamide at 500 mg twice daily or placebo for 12 months.

Damian said that a reduction in skin cancer was seen as early as the first 3-month visit and that the benefit was no longer seen after patients stopped taking the tablets at 12 months.

Damian noticed that nicotinamide is different from niacin, a different form of vitamin B3 that has a number of adverse effects like headaches, flushing, and low blood pressure, none of which were seen in patients taking nicotinamide.

Commenting on the results of this study, ASCO President Peter Paul Yu, MD, FACP, FASCO said, “This is a very exciting prevention trial. You know we clamor for cancer prevention rather than treating the disease, and this is a major advance for us.”