Objectives

1. To understand indications for and methods of biopsy, and to establish diagnoses for patients with skin lesions.
2. To describe characteristics of nonmelanoma skin cancers (basal cell and squamous cell carcinoma).
3. To develop a management plan for a patient with basal cell carcinoma.
4. To develop a management plan for a patient with squamous cell carcinoma.
5. To describe characteristics of atypical and dysplastic nevi.
6. To describe characteristics of malignant melanoma.
7. To develop a management plan for a patient with malignant melanoma.
8. To understand indications for and methods of biopsy for soft tissue masses.
9. To develop a management plan for a patient with possible soft tissue sarcoma.

Cases

Case 1

A 52-year-old woman presents with a lesion that has persisted for 1 year and slowly has become larger and more raised over time. There is no family history of skin cancer. Physical exam reveals a flesh-colored raised nodule on the left cheek at the nasolabial fold measuring approximately 7 mm in diameter. The lesion has a pearly appearance and is smooth with rolled borders and surface telangiectasia.
Case 2
A 60-year-old man with a long history of sun exposure presents for evaluation of a nonhealing wound of the forehead of approximately 18 months’ duration. Physical examination reveals widespread actinic sun damage to the skin, with multiple scaly patches measuring 2 to 3 mm. Facial skin is deeply wrinkled, with a few small tan macules 3 to 4 mm in diameter. On the forehead is a 15-mm erythematous, indurated, slightly raised plaque with distinct borders and central ulceration.

Case 3
A 25-year-old woman presents with multiple pigmented lesions of the arms and trunk. She states that they have been present nearly all her life and have not changed in appearance. She is concerned because a distant family member recently was diagnosed with melanoma. Exam reveals multiple discrete 2- to 4-mm homogeneously colored brown to black lesions, some of which are slightly raised.

Case 4
Further examination of the patient described in Case 3 reveals an 8-mm homogeneously pigmented, dark brown lesion on her abdomen. It is asymmetric in shape with scalloped borders and is slightly raised with a variegated surface texture.

Case 5
A 45-year-old man presents with a pigmented lesion on his shoulder. It first appeared in his thirties and slowly enlarged over many years before nearly doubling in size and becoming more raised and nodular over the past year. He is fair-skinned, and his natural hair color is sandy blond. He is an avid outdoorsman, but he does not wear sunscreen. His father has been diagnosed with melanoma. Examination reveals an 18-mm raised, nodular, darkly pigmented lesion with variegated color and surface texture with scalloped borders. There is no palpable lymphadenopathy.

Case 6
A 37-year-old man presents with painless swelling of the right thigh, with rapid progression over the past 4 to 6 months. Physical exam reveals a poorly circumscribed mass measuring 10 × 8 cm over the proximal anterior right thigh. It is deep and firm on palpation, nonfluctuant, and immobile.

Skin Lesions

Introduction
Most skin lesions are benign and can be diagnosed on examination based solely on physical characteristics. The identification and diag-