A clinical impact study of dermatologists' use of the 23- or 35-gene expression profile (GEP) tests to guide surgical excision and enhance management plan confidence

Aaron S Farberg, MD[1], Kelli L Ahmed, PhD[2], Briana B Rackley, PhD[2], Jennifer J Siegel, PhD[2], Brooke H Russell, PhD[2], Jason H Rogers, MSc[2], Sarah J Kurley, PhD[2], and Matthew S Goldberg, MD[2,3]

[1]Baylor Scott & White Health System, Dallas, TX [2]Castle Biosciences, Inc., Friendswood, TX [3]Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY

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Background

- The 23-gene expression profile (**GEP**) and **35-GEP** tests are clinically available, objective ancillary diagnostic tools that facilitate diagnosis of melanocytic lesions with ambiguous histopathology. The tests use proprietary algorithms to provide results: suggestive of **benign** neoplasm; **intermediate** (cannot rule out malignancy); or suggestive of **malignant** neoplasm with high accuracy.[1-6]
- Communication between the diagnosing dermatopathologist/pathologist and the treating clinician is key to establishing appropriate patient management.[7,8] There are circumstances when a dermatologist may find additional diagnostic information helpful in determining excision and follow-up actions.[9,10]

Here we present dermatologist management plans and confidence utilizing diagnostic GEP results in uncertain clinical and diagnostic scenarios

Methods

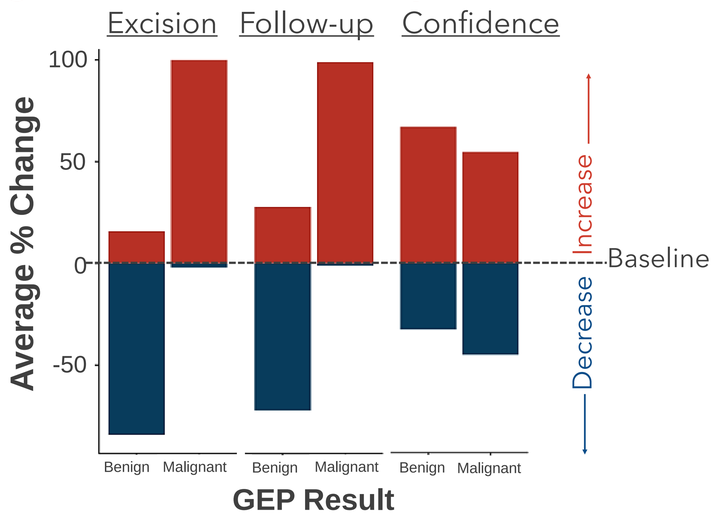
- Clinicians were invited for study participation based on prior use of diagnostic GEP testing (minimum 3 encounters with GEP results). Thirty-two board certified dermatologists participated in this Institutional Review Board (IRB)-approved study. Clinicians were asked three questions per scenario: **1) How would you treat the patient?** No further treatment necessary, No further treatment necessary if lesion appears completely excised, Excise <5 mm margins (narrow but complete), Excise ≥5 mm margins (but <1 cm), Wide local excision (Excise ≥1 cm; **2) Which follow-up schedule would you recommend?** Every 12, 6, 3, or every month; **3) How confident are you in this management plan?** 1 (not confident), 2 (slightly confident), 3 (somewhat confident), 4 (fairly confident), 5 (completely confident).
- Clinical and diagnostic information for six uncertain patient scenarios was provided (**Table 1**). Diagnostic information was taken from real-world pathology reports of melanocytic lesions and displayed in mock form including the diagnosis and microscopic description. Clinical information was based on common clinical situations that may alter patient treatment. GEP test results were either not provided (baseline), benign, or malignant for each patient scenario.

Results

Table 1. Ambiguous lesion scenarios from real-world pathology reports

Clinical Impression	Diagnosis	Included excision recommendation
Cosmetic site	Melanocytic neoplasm, atypical melanocytic proliferation	**No**
Cosmetic site	Dysplastic nevus with features of regression	Yes
Personal history of melanoma	Melanocytic neoplasm, atypical melanocytic proliferation	**No**
Personal history of melanoma	Melanocytic neoplasm, deep penetrating	Yes
Comorbidities	Atypical intraepidermal melanocytic proliferation (AIMP)	Yes
High clinical suspicion	Atypical intraepidermal melanocytic proliferation (AIMP)	Yes

Figure 1. Overall clinical impact across all ambiguous scenarios



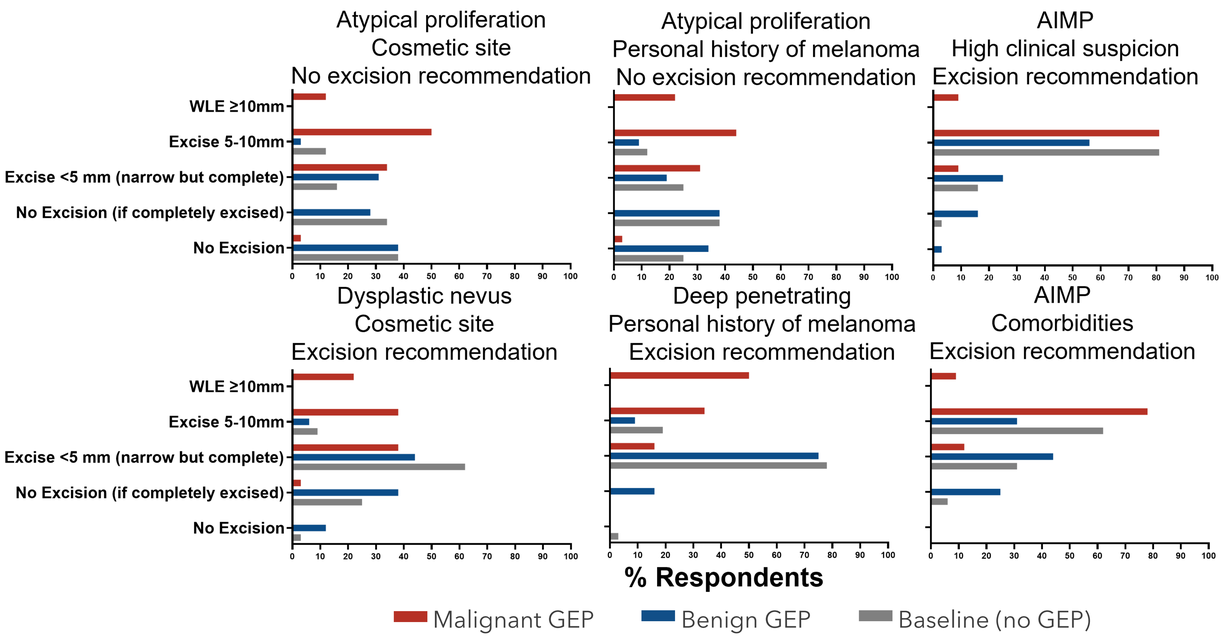
Clinical impact

The majority of excision decisions and follow-up changes were aligned with GEP results across the uncertain scenarios. There was also an increase in management plan confidence with GEP results provided

- Clinical impact was assessed by calculating the mean percent of no change, increase in change, or decrease in change relative to no GEP results (baseline) for each scenario and normalized to 100%.

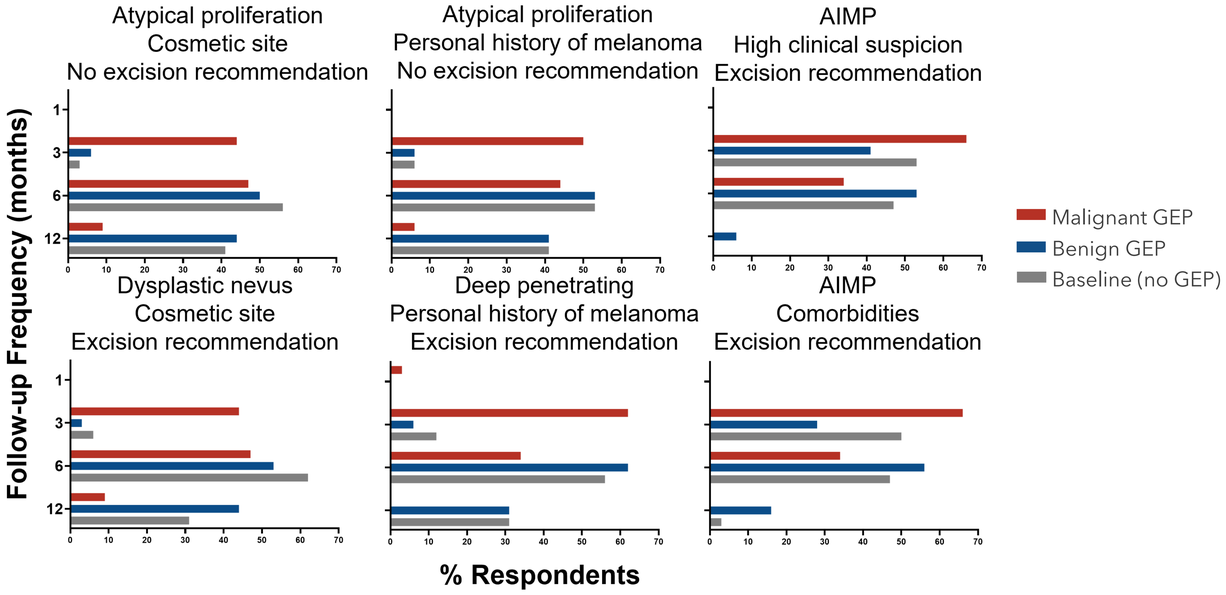
Results

Figure 2. GEP results impact surgical excision planning and margin decisions



- Surgical margins: When a malignant GEP result wass provided, there was an increase in surgical treatment for most scenarios. When a benign GEP result was received, there was a decrease in surgical management intensity in most scenarios.

Figure 3. GEP results alter recommended follow-up frequency



Conclusions

- GEP results can aid dermatologists in decision making to achieve appropriate management plans
- Management changes, including surgical excisions and follow-up frequency, were aligned with GEP results for these uncertain clinical scenarios
- Scenario-specific survey results demonstrate that a personalized approach can be achieved with GEP

References

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For more information: afarberg@castlebiosciences.com