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PATIENT SAFETY NETWORK

Algorithm based smartphone apps to assess risk of skin cancer in adults: systematic review of diagnostic accuracy studies.

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Freeman K, Dinnes J, Chuchu N, et al. Algorithm based smartphone apps to assess risk of skin cancer in adults: systematic review of diagnostic accuracy studies. BMJ. 2020;368:m127. doi:10.1136/bmj.m127.
https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/algorithm-based-smartphone-apps-assess-risk-skin-cancer-adults-systematic-review-diagnostic

Delays in cancer diagnosis can lead to adverse patient outcomes. This systematic review examined whether smartphone-based apps can assist patients in assessing skin cancer risk and whether they should seek medical attention for suspicious lesions. The review included nine studies evaluating six different smartphone apps; reported sensitivity and specificity varied widely across studies. The authors note limitations of the included studies, such as failure to recruit a population representative of the general population. Findings are consistent with earlier studies reporting poor performance of smartphone apps for melanoma detection. Although these apps are intended to reduce delays in diagnosis, the authors conclude they can't be relied upon for detection of all cases of skin cancer.