

IRISH EXAMINER WED 27/06/07



Cork senior footballers Michael Shields, Ger Spillane and Nicholas Murphy getting some tips on sun protection to guard against skin cancer from Dr Fergus Lyons, dermatologist, South Infirmary Victoria Hospital, Cork.

Picture: Neil Danton

Rebels take to big screen in cancer drive

AS PART of a campaign to raise awareness of malignant melanoma, consultant dermatologists Dr John Bourke and Dr Fergus Lyons, (South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital, Cork) screened the Cork Senior Football panel at Páirc Uí Rinn last night for skin cancer ahead of their Munster Final appearance against Kerry next Sunday.

The incidence of malignant melanoma in Ireland is rising and over 500 cases are reported each year. Melanoma is the most serious type of skin cancer. It affects all ages and is one of the few cancers to affect young adults. Melanoma is the second most common cancer in men aged between 15 and 39 years. Early

detection is vital for successful treatment.

Melanoma most frequently occurs on the trunk in men and usually appears as a changing mole or freckle. It is recommended that everyone should check all of their skin at least once a year for any new or changing lesion. The American Academy of Dermatology promotes the practice of this with the slogan: "Check your birthday suit on your birthday!"

The main risk factor for melanoma is sunburn. It is important for sportspeople, such as GAA players who mainly play in the summer months, to protect their skin from the sun. This is best done by keeping shirts on and by protecting exposed areas with a sunblock with

an SPF of factor 15 and above.

A rapid access pigmented lesion skin clinic was established over three years ago in the South Infirmary/Victoria University Hospital, Cork to facilitate early diagnosis and treatment of melanomas. This clinic serves the Cork/Kerry catchment area.

Any Cork or Kerry patient with a lesion suspicious for melanoma can be referred by their GP to this dedicated weekly clinic and will generally be seen by a consultant dermatologist within two weeks. Suspicious lesions will usually be removed on the day. Over 130 patients with melanoma have been detected and treated by this clinic.