

Symptoms^{1,2}

Merkel cell carcinomas commonly appear as painless pink, red or purple bumps on the skin. They usually appear on areas of skin exposed to the sun, such as the face, neck, arms, and legs, but they can occur anywhere on the body. Sometimes the skin on the top of the tumor might break open and bleed.

Key Risk Factors³⁻⁵

- Exposure to a lot of natural or artificial sunlight
- A weakened immune system due to diseases, such as HIV or chronic lymphocytic leukemia
- Taking medication that suppresses the immune system (e.g., after an organ transplant)
- A history of other types of cancer
- Older age (≥50 years)
- Male
- Fair skin
- Infection with the Merkel cell polyomavirus, present in approximately 80% of MCC tumors

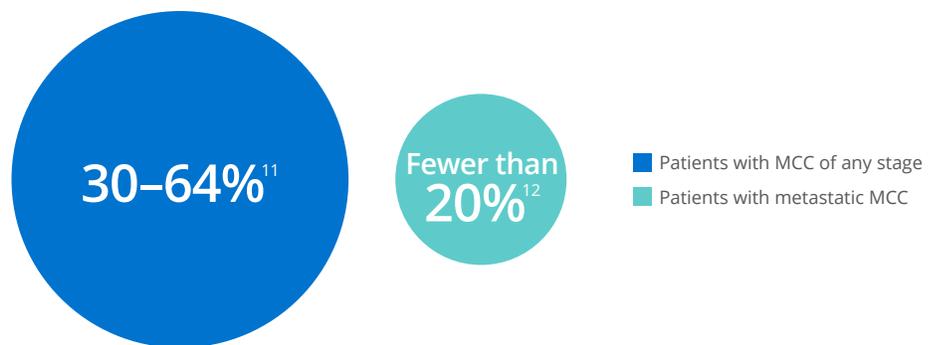
What is Merkel Cell Carcinoma?

Merkel cell carcinoma (MCC) is a **rare and aggressive form of skin cancer**.⁶ In MCC, malignant cells form in the top layer of the skin, close to the nerve endings that sense touch.³ Once the cancer starts to metastasize, or spread, to other parts of the body, it becomes metastatic MCC.³

Diagnosis and Prognosis

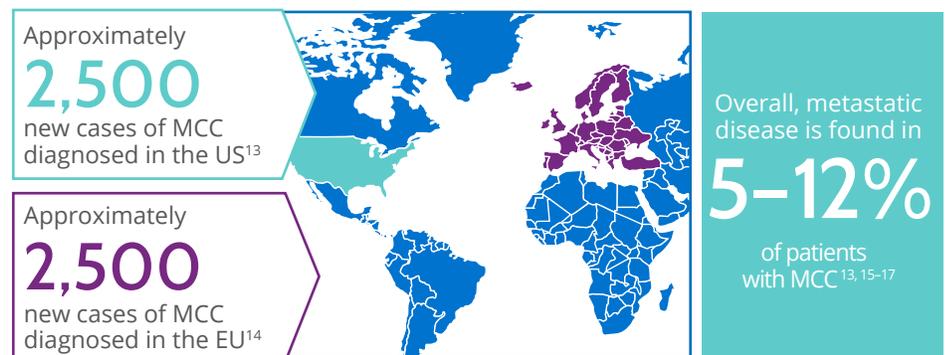
MCC is often misdiagnosed as other skin cancers and grows at an exponential rate on chronically sun-damaged skin.⁷⁻¹⁰ The prognosis for MCC is poor and worsens as the tumor metastasizes.^{11,12}

Proportion of patients surviving beyond 5 years:^{11,12}



Incidence

Epidemiologic data suggest that each year there are:



References

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