

Skin cancer related conditions managed in general practice in Australia, 2000 to 2016

Summary

Solar keratoses and keratinocyte cancers are the main skin cancer related conditions managed in general practice with melanoma being the least managed. The types of skin problems encountered varied by age, gender, patient residence, language background, socioeconomic status and card holder status.

Background

- Most skin cancers are managed in primary care settings in Australia, yet we know little about the frequency of general practitioner (GP) visits for different types of skin cancer related conditions.
- This study examined the frequency of Australian general practice consultations for skin cancer related conditions by patient and general practitioner (GP) characteristics and by time-period (April 2000 to March 2016)

Methods

- Data from the Australian Bettering the Evaluation And Care of Health (BEACH) study between 2000 and 2016 were extracted for patients aged 15 years or older.
- Differences in proportions and rates per 1,000 encounters of skin conditions managed at GP encounters were compared using Chi-square tests and t-tests.

Results

In this period, 15,678 GPs recorded 1,370,826 patient encounters, at which skin cancer related conditions were managed 65,411 times (rate of 4.77 per 100 encounters, 95% confidence interval (CI): 4.64-4.90). Skin conditions managed were solar keratosis (29.87%), keratinocyte cancer (24.85%), other skin lesion (12.93%), nevi (10.98%), skin check (10.37%), benign skin neoplasm (8.76%) and melanoma (2.42%). Over time, management rates increased for keratinocyte cancers, skin checks, skin lesions, benign skin neoplasms, and melanoma; but remained stable for solar keratoses and nevi (Figure 1). Skin cancer related encounter rates were higher for patients aged 65-89 years (Figure 2), males, living in Queensland or in regional or remote areas (Figure 3), with lower geographical area-based socio-economic status, of English-speaking background, Veteran card holders, and non-healthcare card holders; and for GPs who were aged 35-44 years or male.

Figure 1. Management rate per 1,000 encounters of all skin cancer related conditions combined and of each skin cancer related condition managed in general practice, 2000-2016.

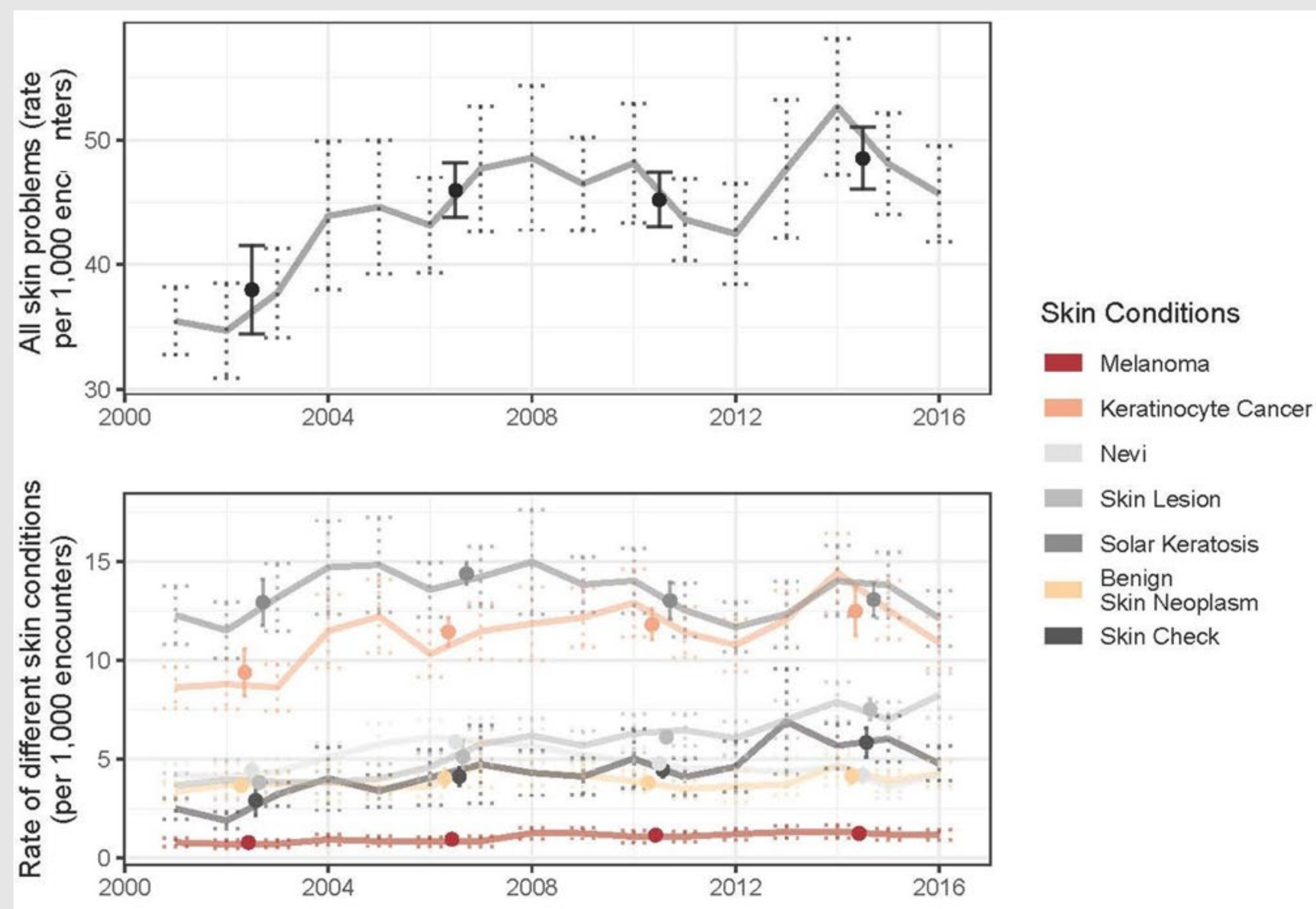


Figure 2. Rates per 1,000 skin cancer related condition encounters combined by age group, 2000 to 2016.

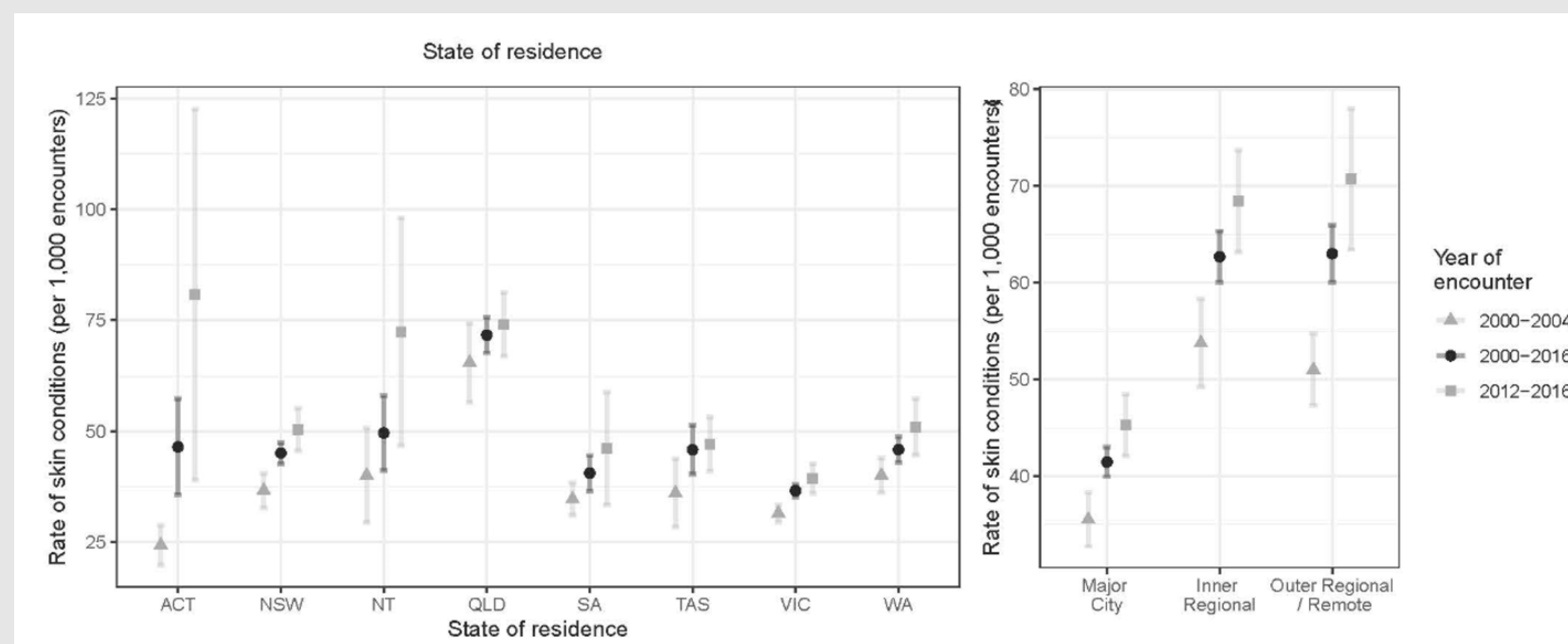
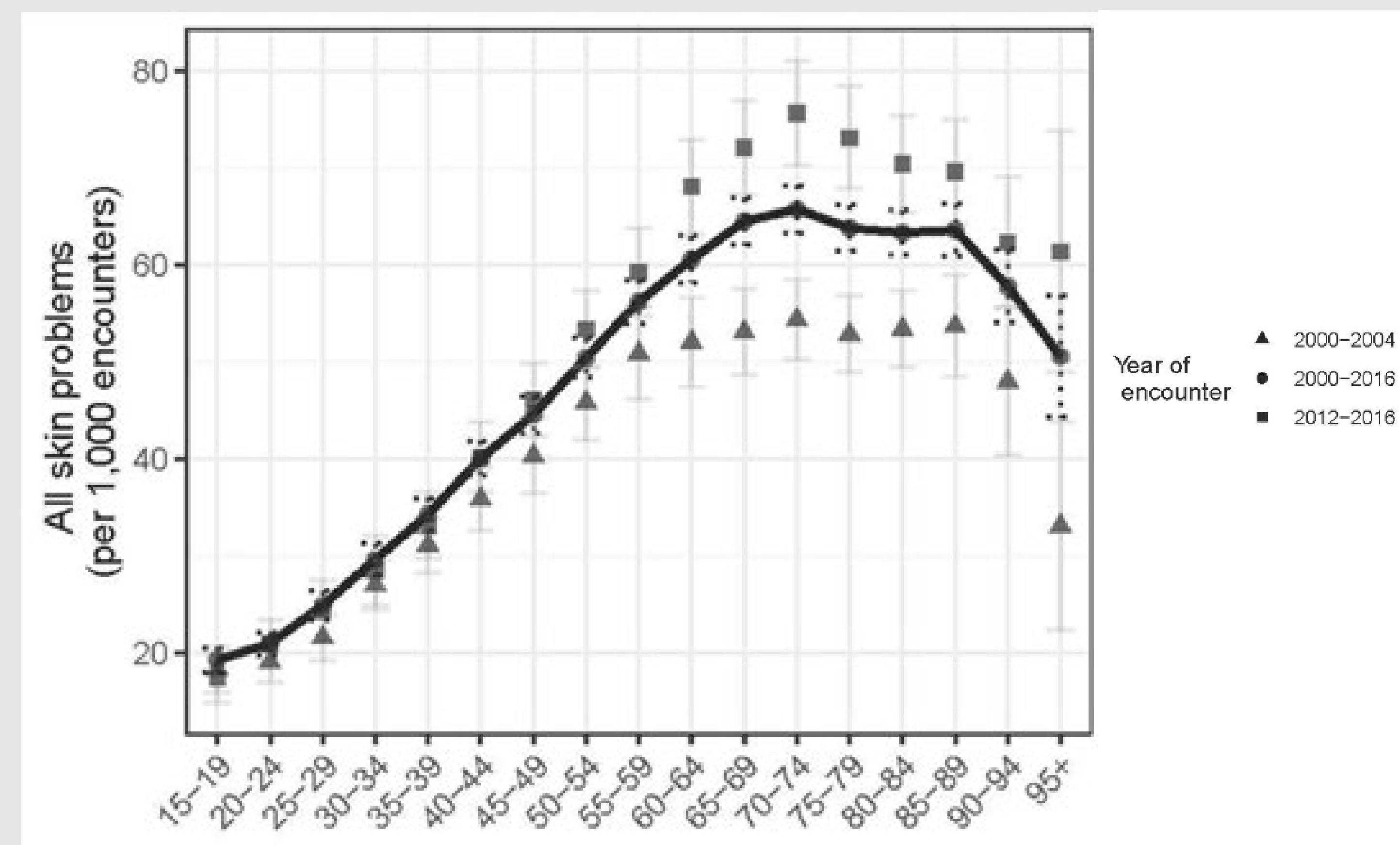


Figure 3. Rates per 1,000 skin cancer related condition encounters by State/Territory and remoteness, 2000 to 2016.

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