

**Letter to the Editor – *New York Times*
November 20, 2017**

Dear Editor,

[“Skin Cancers Rise – Along with Questionable Treatments”](#) spotlights distressing behaviors not reflective of the vast majority of dermatology practices.

All patients should have access to the optimal care available and be educated on their skin cancer treatment options, so they can decide the best treatment plan with their board-certified dermatologist. While physician assistants are part of the patient care team, they don’t have the extensive training of board-certified dermatologists and should provide care with direct, on-site supervision.

Mr. Riley Wood falsely believed he was being treated by a physician. This is indicative of a widespread lack of understanding of “who’s wearing the white coat,” demonstrating the need for tighter laws requiring disclosure of qualifications.

To label patients >65 “frail elderly” mischaracterizes the highly functional patient population treated by the majority of dermatologists, of which nearly half receive non-surgical treatments. Certainly, patients should be offered the gold standard for skin cancer--surgical removal, if circumstances warrant it.



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