

The Effect of Behaviour and Beliefs on the Effective Use of Sunscreen

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Background

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the UK

Public Health messages

Retail market

Aim of the study.



Methodology

Study Population

Information Requested During the Interview

Question Responses

Conclusions

Discussion Points.



Methodology

South Wales May 2009

202 Randomly Selected Adults



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Study Population

Outdoor Locations

Beach

Golf Course

Town Centre.



Do You Protect Yourself From the Sun?

74.7% - 151 participants used some form of protection

24.7% - 50 participants did not use any form of protection

0.6% - 1 participant did not go out in the sun.



How Much Sunscreen should be applied to one person ?

35ml is the dosage for self application

72 would use an insufficient dosage

76 would use a correct dosage or more

54 didn't use sunscreen.



How Long Would a 250ml Bottle Of Sunscreen Last ?

2 days

8 gave the correct answer

182 gave an incorrect answer

12 didn't know.



How Long Would a 250ml Bottle Of Sunscreen Last a Family of Four ?

Half a day

4 gave the correct answer

187 gave an incorrect answer

11 didn't know.



How Long Would it Take for Sunscreen to Become Fully Effective After Application ?

30 minutes

62 gave the correct answer

112 thought it was effective immediately or within 15 minutes

12 thought it would be effective after an hour

16 didn't know.



What is the Difference Between Sunscreen Marked SPF 15 and one Marked SPF 30 ?

SPF 30 blocks 4% more UVB than one marked SPF 15

132 thought SPF 30 offered higher protection

33 thought they could stay in the sun longer with SPF30

2 thought there is no difference

2 thought SPF related to sun temperature

2 thought SPF related to skin types

31 didn't know.



Is a Natural Sun Tan Safer Than a Sun Tan From a UV Bed ?

There is no difference in levels of safety between the two

98 thought a natural tan was safer

78 thought a UV sun bed tan was safer

26 gave a don't know response.



Why do You Believe a Natural Sun Tan is Safer ?

28 believed sun is more natural and so less harmful

31 believed sunlight is not as intense as artificial UV light

12 believed the sun is less dangerous than a sun bed

8 believed different UV is emitted by a sun bed

5 believed no sunscreen is used on a sun bed

14 gave a don't know response.



What is the Protective Effect of a Suntan?

32 believe a suntan provides a degree of protection

147 believe there is no protection given by having a suntan

23 gave a don't know response.



Do You use an Aftersun Product ?

110 use an aftersun product

92 do not use an aftersun product.



Conclusions

Whilst a high percentage of individuals understand the need for protection against the effects of the sun and use sunscreen as protection there is strong optimistic bias about the degree of protection the sunscreen affords

Individuals recognise the required dose and claim to apply it, but in practice do not do so

Based on the understanding of the level of delay in sunscreen taking effect it may be that in many cases a period of unprotected exposure takes place due to the late application of the sunscreen.



Conclusions

Confusion over the meaning of the SPF system may lead to unintended over exposure

The high proportion of interviewees who stated that they used 'After Sun' products to deal with the adverse effects of over exposure supports the evidence in respect of over exposure, as individuals appear to have an expectation that they will suffer from a degree of sun burn and believe 'After Sun' products are intended to deal with this

It appears to be recognised that a sun tan confers no health benefit in terms of protection from skin cancer.



Conclusions

There is misunderstanding about the relative safety of 'natural' tans when compared to tans obtained using UV tanning equipment

Health professionals should build on the existing awareness of the need for protection with clear and simple messages about how sun screen works and the need to ensure that it is used properly if over exposure and the elevated risk of skin cancer are to be avoided.



Discussion Points to Consider

The correct message

The cost of sunscreen

Sun protection factors

Use of sun beds.



Thank You.



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