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Attitudes and predictors of sunless tanning in a sample of young adults

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Abstract

Attitudes and predictors of sunless tanning in a sample of young adults

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Given the popularity of a tan appearance, sunless tanning may play a role in skin cancer prevention as a substitute for ultraviolet (UV) tanning. Few studies have comprehensively assessed attitudes toward sunless tanning or predictors of use.

Demographic, phenotypic, and lifestyle characteristics were ascertained during in-person interviews of 385 non-Hispanic whites (<age 40) who were controls in a case-control study of early-onset basal cell carcinoma. Attitudes toward sunless tanning were queried via self-administered questionnaire. We calculated basic descriptive statistics and determined predictors of ever use of sunless tanning among females with multivariate logistic regression.

Approximately half (52.5%) of participants (median age=38) used sunless tanning at least once. Most participants agreed that sunless tanning was safe for use, and inadequate substitutes for sunscreen. Among females who used sunless tanning, attitudes regarding the convenience and appearance of sunless tans were generally favorable, though a large proportion expressed that sunless tans do not last as long or look the same as UV tans. Predictors of use among females (n=272), included indoor tanning (>75 sessions vs no indoor tanning OR=3.30, 95% CI=1.52-7.16), a tendency to burn with first summer sun exposure (OR=1.89, 95% CI=1.03-3.47), higher public body consciousness (OR=1.09, 95% CI=1.02-1.18), and believing sunless tanning was useful for tanning when weather is not optimal for sunbathing (OR=5.08, 95% CI=2.11-12.22).

Results suggest young adults find sunless tanning to be an acceptable method of achieving a tanned appearance. Sunless tanning may prove useful in reducing UV exposure, particularly among females who engage in sunbathing or indoor tanning.