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

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4w79k2g3

Dermatology Online Journal, 22(9)

Anderson, Chelsea
Cartmel, Brenda
Mayne, Susan T
et al.

2016

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0
Abstract

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

Chelsea Anderson¹, Brenda Cartmel¹,², Susan T. Mayne¹,²,³, Leah M. Ferrucci¹,²

Dermatology Online Journal 22 (9)

¹Yale School of Public Health, New Haven, CT 06510, United States
²Yale Cancer Center, New Haven, CT 06510, United States
³Current affiliation: Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, Food and Drug Administration. The opinions and conclusions expressed in this article are solely the views of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Food and Drug Administration.

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.