

## EDITORIAL

**Sunbed use in Europe: Time for information**V. del Marmol,<sup>1</sup> A. Stratigos,<sup>2</sup> P. Calzavara-Pinton,<sup>3</sup> M. Augustin<sup>4,\*</sup> <sup>1</sup>Department of Dermatology, Hôpital Erasme, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium<sup>2</sup>First Department of Dermatology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, School of Medicine, Andreas Sygros Hospital, Athens, Greece<sup>3</sup>Dermatology Department, University of Brescia, ASST Spedali Civili di Brescia, Brescia, Italy<sup>4</sup>Institute for Health Services Research in Dermatology and Nursing (IVDP), University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE), Hamburg, Germany

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Ultraviolet radiation (UVR) is a major carcinogen in humans. Aside from its well-proven mutagenic effects in skin carcinogenesis, it has been recently shown that even an apparently healthy skin is full of cells with UVR-mutated DNA able to initiate future skin cancer. Primary prevention of skin cancer remains a difficult task since UV-induced tanning results in a substantial improvement of the physical appearance of fair skin perceived by current social norms, while engendering a feeling of well-being through endorphin synthesis and creating a relaxing and 'holiday' mood.

Indoor tanning is quite a recent practice which has increased UVR-exposure behaviour with all the risks associated. Major epidemiologic evidence now confirms that sunbed use significantly increases skin cancer risk, including the most serious and often fatal cutaneous melanoma. Early onset exposure before the age of 35 almost doubles the relative risk of melanoma. Additionally, scientific evidence suggests that indoor tanning induces addiction by endorphin production. In countries where no minority restriction regulation exists, it comprises of a serious health hazard for teenagers and young adults, adding to their cumulative UVR exposure during their holidays. The WHO has thus issued a warning on the risks of artificial tanning for public health in a 2017 booklet.

Until now and even after many awareness campaigns, we have not really been successful in reducing significantly skin cancer incidence through primary prevention. To limit sunbed exposure is a unique prevention opportunity, since this is an issue that does not entirely rely on personal awareness and behaviour modification, but also depends on overall health policy and legislative control.

In 2012, during a skin cancer awareness day organized at the European parliament, a round table was organized in collaboration with European Associations led by dermatologists (EADV,

Euromelanoma, EADO), the European Cancer leagues, the WHO and the European Community (DG Health). The purpose was to share information about sunbed use in Europe. Following this meeting, an official call was made by all participants to develop further regulation of sunbed use at the European level. Furthermore, a letter of support for this action was signed in 2018 by EADV, EADO, EDF, Euromelanoma and the European Cancer Leagues to show their commitment. Stemming from this activity, and under the strong consideration that it is our duty as dermatologists to support scientific knowledge concerning the use of tanning devices with known carcinogenic consequences when used in non-medical ways, we have produced this supplement, with the following aims:

- 1 to complete the knowledge of UV carcinogenesis,
- 2 to quantify the use of sunbeds in Europe using the data generated by the Euromelanoma campaigns,
- 3 to put forth the arguments used by the industry to favour sunbed use, such as the increase in vitamin D levels,
- 4 to review the legal aspects of sunbed use in European and EU countries
- 5 to address the involvement of cancer leagues all over Europe in such prevention goals and,
- 6 to review the costs that will be borne by the community for skin cancer treatment in the future.

As editors of this supplement, we have included several European authors (dermatologists but also other stakeholders) who have been willing to promote a broad overview of the subject. It is our wish that not only the scientific communities but also all other stakeholders become aware of how the use of sunbeds contributes to the development of skin cancer and the burden it places on all communities and healthcare systems.

Brussels/Athens/Brescia/Hamburg, 14 May 2018.



**Skin Cancer Awareness Day**  
4 December 2012, European Parliament

**Reducing Skin Cancer Incidence in Europe**  
**Call for Further Action to Control the Use of Sun Beds**

**CALL FOR ACTION**

In recognition that sunbed use is widely unregulated or poorly monitored in Europe, we the undersigned Members of the European Parliament undertake to assist in the creation of EU-wide legislation that would ensure:

1. A total ban on sun beds for under 18s
2. Forbid advertising of sunbeds and home tanning devices
3. Documentation and standardisation of health advice given at tanning outlets and provided with home devices
4. A complete ban on coin operated tanning devices and home tanning devices
5. Implementation of a registry of tanning centres and equipment in member states
6. Strict implementation of the regulations with monitoring by independent statutory bodies in member states.

In addition, member states and relevant stakeholders should be encouraged to develop, run and monitor educational campaigns that target the most susceptible populations.

Signed :

*[Handwritten signatures and notes in various colors (black, blue, red) covering the bottom half of the page. Some legible names include: P. Basso, C. I. Stock, L. P. Petek, G. McElwain, J. Zupa, and others. There are also some handwritten notes and scribbles.]*