



ACADEMIC FRAUD?

IARC Report Declaring UV “Carcinogenic to Humans” ignored conflicting information

JACKSON, Mich. (July 29) – The International Agency for Research on Cancer ignored conflicting information in its classification of ultraviolet light as ‘carcinogenic to humans’ – a one-dimensional conclusion that benefits the \$35 billion sunscreen industry, which has strong financial ties to most of the dermatology community today, and forgets the fact that humans need UV light to live.

“If a pharmaceutical company sold you sunshine, we wouldn't be having this discussion right now,” International Smart Tan Network Vice President Joseph Levy said. “Instead, we are dealing with a report that now has the press comparing Mother Nature’s most important creation – sunlight – to arsenic and mustard gas. It’s ludicrous.”

“Saying that UV exposure is harmful and should be avoided is as wrong as saying that water causes drowning, and therefore we should avoid water.”

No data has ever been presented suggesting that UV exposure in a non-burning fashion is a significant risk factor for any skin damage, nor has a mechanism been established whereby UV causes melanoma, which is more common in indoor workers than in outdoor workers and which occurs most commonly on parts of the body that don’t get regular UV exposure.

IARC cited its own report alleging “risk of skin melanoma is increased by 75 per cent when people started using tanning beds before age 30.” Ignored in this statement is confounding information pointing out that:

- IARC’s analysis was flawed. When the palest individuals who cannot tan (called Skin Type I – people who are not allowed to tan in North American tanning facilities) were removed from the IARC data set, there was no increase in risk for the group being studied.
- In fact, 18 of 22 studies on this topic show no statistically significant relationship between indoor tanning and melanoma – including the largest and most recent study.

“Ignoring conflicting information in the publication of a report and elevating your conclusion without bringing confounding information to light constitutes academic fraud,” Levy said. “This report presents no new data, ignores confounding information and attempts to reach a new conclusion with no new information. While it remains prudent for individuals to avoid sunburn, it should be noted that there is NO RESEARCH suggesting that non-burning UV exposure is a significant risk factor for humans. None.”

Levy continued, “Further, it is clearer now more than ever that humans NEED regular UV exposure as the only true natural way to make vitamin D. It is called ‘The Sunshine Vitamin’ for a reason: You produce more vitamin D by getting a tan in a non-burning fashion than you would from drinking 100 glasses of whole milk. We are very concerned that the politics of profit-motivated anti-UV groups are misrepresenting the balanced message about sunlight that a true, independent evaluation of the science supports.

The U.S. government in 2000 placed ultraviolet light on the federal government’s list of known human carcinogens. But the criteria to be labeled a carcinogen does not take into account the dosage of a substance required to increase risk – which means that the listing only indicts sunburn, not non-burning exposure. According to that report, “The Report does not present quantitative assessments of carcinogenic risk. Listing of substances in the Report, therefore, does not establish that such substances present carcinogenic risks to individuals in their daily lives.” This exclusion makes this listing meaningless.

In doing so, ultraviolet light became the first item on that list that humans need to live and would die if they didn’t receive.

Smart Tan will continue to report on this issue in Member Advisories and in Tanning Trends magazine and will discuss this listing at length at Smart Tan Downtown: Smart Tan’s 14th Annual Convention in Downtown Nashville Oct. 9-11.

QUICK ANSWERS: If asked in your community about this issue, here are answers from Smart Tan you can use:

1. This list means nothing more than SUNBURN is harmful. There’s no research suggesting that non-burning exposure is harmful.
2. Many of the parties promoting this list have ties to the \$35 billion sunscreen industry, which wants you to over-use their product.
3. Saying that ultraviolet light causes skin cancer and therefore should be avoided is just like saying water causes drowning and therefore should be avoided. You need water in order to live and survive – just as you need ultraviolet light in order to live and survive.
4. By including UV light on a list of carcinogens without making the statement clear that overexposure, and not mere exposure, is the danger, the makers of this list have made a glaring and fraudulent omission.