

GLOBAL SKIN HEALTH

## PARENTS' KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS REGARDING SUN PROTECTION IN CHILDREN: A SURVEY

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**Introduction:** Childhood is a critical period for sun protection, because the skin is more susceptible to the carcinogenic effects of sun exposure. Children are dependent upon parents to implement sun protective measures.

**Objective:** The aim of the study was to explore parents' knowledge and understanding of sun protection behaviours in both themselves and their children.

**Materials and Methods:** A cross-sectional study was carried out between March 2017-March 2018. A total of 700 randomly selected participants who applied to dermatology outpatient clinic and had or caregiving children younger than 10 years, included. Questionnaires about sun protection were applied to the participants, and "Knowledge" was assessed by the number of correct (true/ false) answers to 10 questions, "Behaviour" was assessed by recording the frequency of measures adopted by parents themselves and to children on a five-point scale ranging from "never" to "always".

**Results:** The mean age was  $5,2 \pm 3,0$  years for children and  $35,1 \pm 5,6$  years for parents. Of the total 700 participants 616 were mother (88%), 84 were father (11.7%) and 2 were caregivers (0.3). One hundred and nine (15%) said they had been at least one sunburnt last year. One hundred and seventysix participants (25%) stated they had never used sunscreens to their children. Staying in the shade and using hats was cited as the preferred method. Women (16,2%) were found to use regularly twice as many sunscreen creams as men (8,5%). The questions which were answered correctly most often: "Children who has fair skin are more susceptible to sun related skin cancer." which 83% of parents knew to be true. Given those of higher education level had adopted healthier sun protective behaviours ( $p < 0,05$ ).

**Conclusions:** The results of this study revealed that parents' sun protection behaviours in children is not adequate. Our study indicates key challenges which could be targeted in future campaigns in order to improve sun protection in children.