



PHOTOBIOLOGY AND PHOTOPROTECTION

## **ASSESSMENT OF SUN PROTECTION BEHAVIOURS AMONGST YOUTH: A DESCRIPTIVE CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY**

*S Kalia<sup>(1)</sup> - L Scott<sup>(1)</sup> - C Han<sup>(1)</sup>*

*University Of British Columbia, Dermatology And Skin Science, Vancouver, Canada<sup>(1)</sup>*

Introduction: Despite adequate understanding of the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation sun protection remains low.

Objective: The primary aim of this study is to evaluate barriers to sun protection amongst youth, including reasons for not applying sunscreens or protective clothing.

Method: In 2016, 1220 youths were targeted in 50 classrooms in Canada. Approximately 83.1% of participants responded. Questions were assessed to determine frequency of risky sun exposure behaviours practiced, barriers to sunscreen and protective clothing, and knowledge of SPF, UPF, and UVI.

Results: Over 50% of youths practiced five or more risky sun protection behaviours out of the seven behaviours practiced. Males were more likely to experience sunburns (54.2% $\pm$ 1.5%), infrequently use sunglasses (68.4% $\pm$ 1.6), infrequently use sunscreen on the face and body (65.8  $\pm$ 1.6% and 73.3% $\pm$ 1.7%, respectively), infrequent use of a shady place (51.9  $\pm$ 1.5%). Major reasons for not using sunscreen reported by youths were annoyance of application (79.0% $\pm$ 1.5%) and an unpleasant feeling on the skin (69.7% $\pm$ 2.2%). Whereas, cost and peer influence were reported as less likely to be barriers (14.8 $\pm$ 0.8% and 6.2 $\pm$ 0.2%, respectively). Majority of youths reported protective clothing feeling too hot to apply for sun protection (93.1 $\pm$ 2.8%). Over three quarter of youths didn't know what UPF and UVI values were.

Conclusions: Majority of youths do not practice adequate sun protection. Barriers to use sunscreen and protective clothing are due to the unacceptability of product feeling comfortable rather than cost or peer pressure. Therefore, future targeted prevention campaigns can educate youths of sunscreens and protective clothing with improved consumer acceptability and also educate on SPF, UPF and UVI sun protection policies.

