

Get Brown Tanning

From: International Smart Tan Network [webmaster@smarttan.com]
Sent: 6 December 2009 2:31 a.m.
To: getbrown@getbrown.co.nz
Subject: Smart Tan Member Advisory :: Friday's 20/20 Story

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Friends --

ABC News "20/20" program on Friday teamed up with Cosmopolitan Magazine on a 7-minute segment designed to support Cosmo's stated goal of discouraging indoor tanning usage, but which many observers in the tanning market feel fell short of making a convincing case.

The point of doing a hidden camera expose was to attempt to catch tanning operators making unsupportable claims, and most of the statements made by operators in the story were actually rather unremarkable. Essentially, operators pointed out that:

- UVB makes vitamin D, which is completely true.
- Tanning in a non-burning fashion isn't something anyone should worry about, which, while downplaying the risk of overexposure, is still much more accurate than what dermatologists and chemical sunscreen manufacturers mis-state: that any UV exposure is damaging.

Nonetheless, the story made several allegations that Smart Tan feels you should be prepared to respond to if confronted by clients.

1) Are tanning facilities overexposing clients if a client is allowed to tan longer than the incremental times on a unit's recommended exposure schedule?

20/20 misled viewers on this, failing to point out that tanning exposure schedules have two categories:

Recommended incremental exposure times: These are conservative guidelines that a trained operator uses to assign incremental exposure times for tanners that can lead up to a unit's maximum time. Incremental times were never intended to be used as absolutes - they were not designed that way - and it is widely recognized that they are overly conservative.

Maximum exposure times: A unit's maximum exposure time IS an absolute that is never exceeded, and no tanner in the 20/20 segment was ever permitted to exceed this.

2) 20/20 showed a salon employee saying that the threat of skin cancer from tanning "is not a problem."

The reason there is misunderstanding about this question is that anti-sun lobbying groups have conspicuously OVERSTATED what the research does say, which produces confusion among clients before they ever enter a store. Dermatology groups are campaigning that any tan is

dangerous, which is even more misleading. While there are some studies suggesting a correlation between those who use indoor tanning and melanoma, the vast majority of studies do not show a statistically significant correlation, and those that do have been independently challenged. What's more, no experimental studies have ever established a "causal" relationship and research has yet to establish a proven mechanism by which UV and melanoma are related. Nevertheless, the consent forms signed by all tanners at our salons inform our clients that UV exposure may be related to melanoma. All of that makes it confusing for a counter employee to represent the correct nuance of the message.

3) What did Dr. Mehmet Oz say in the segment about tanning?

Two months ago Dr. Mehmet Oz told ABC News' Diane Sawyer "The sun is the best way" to get vitamin D and encouraged Good Morning America's listeners to get 10-15 minutes of mid-day sun exposure without sunscreen. It's obvious that Oz has been criticized for his honesty, because on Friday he backtracked by encouraging supplements to be used as a source of vitamin D and spoke out against indoor tanning. He did not explain why he would encourage unprotected outdoor exposure but not indoor exposure in a non-burning fashion.

It should be noted that indoor tanners have 90 percent higher vitamin D levels as compared to non-tanners, according to Boston University research.

4) 20/20 interviewed a dermatologist who said that no UV exposure is safe.

Dr. Carolyn Jacob runs a cosmetic dermatology clinic that specializes in botox and dermapeel procedures. <http://www.chicagodermatology.com>. It is ironic that someone whose largest procedure involved injecting botulism into skin to mask wrinkles would allege that any UV exposure - nature's natural and intended source of vitamin D - is unsafe.

5) 20/20 interviewed a girl who, although she obviously tanned aggressively outdoors and had many sun-drenched beach vacations, alleged that indoor tanning gave her melanoma.

Dermatology continues to ignore conflicting information in pushing this point.

Melanoma is more common in people who don't get regular UV exposure than it is in those who work outdoors, which could not be possible if it had a direct relationship with UV.

Melanoma is more common on parts of the body that don't get regular sun exposure, which also could not be possible if it had a direct relationship with UV.

There are dermatologists who have questioned whether melanoma has a relationship with UV at all. At the basis of this: There are no studies that have ever examined tanning in a non-burning fashion.

6) Why did 20/20 do this piece?

20/20 and Cosmopolitan magazine are both supported by pharmaceutical advertisers who stand to lose billions in sales if people stop over-using sunscreen products. The uncomfortable relationship between the cosmetic industry and the American Academy of Dermatology has been the subject of considerable debate within the dermatology community. Dr. Bernard Ackerman - the dermatopathology pioneer decorated by the AAD with its highest honor, master dermatologist, led considerable outrage at recent AAD meetings about the millions of dollars AAD receives to endorse sunscreen products and how that money is used to completely fund AAD efforts to promote sunscreen usage. Ackerman documents this in his monograph, "The Sun and the 'Epidemic' of Melanoma Myth on Myth!" which points out that 1) There is no identified mechanism of how UV and melanoma are related, 2) There is no proof that sunscreen usage prevents melanoma, and 3) That dermatology has not been truthful in its positions on these topics. Ackerman has no ties at all to the indoor tanning industry - has no ties to ANY industry, in fact.

20/20's story was less about what goes on in indoor tanning businesses and more about Dermatology and Cosmetic corporations trying to rationalize their over-the-top "fear of the sun" campaigns that we now know have caused a massive vitamin D deficiency epidemic in North America in the past 15 years.

Instead of admitting their mistake - recommending that people avoid any and all UV exposure by wearing sunscreen 365 days a year - they are doubling down and trying to rationalize their mis-statements.

Bottom line: It isn't that indoor tanning facility employees are downplaying the risks of UV exposure,

it's that those who profit from "Sun Scare" have fraudulently overstated the risks of UV exposure.
Check out the new web site - SunScare.com - which examines Sun Scare's overstatement of fact.
And stay tuned. We will keep you posted on developments from this story.

Joe Levy, vice president
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