

Study suggests indoor tanning may be an addictive behavior

April 19 2010

Individuals who have used indoor tanning facilities may meet criteria for addiction, and may also be more prone to anxiety symptoms and substance use, according to a report in the April issue of *Archives of Dermatology*.

"Despite ongoing efforts to educate the public about the health risks associated with natural and non-solar UV radiation, recreational tanning continues to increase among young adults," the authors write as background information in the article. "In addition to the desire for appearance enhancement, motivations for tanning include relaxation, improved mood and socialization." Given these reinforcements, repeated exposure to UV light may result in behavior patterns similar to those observed with substance-related disorders, the authors note.

Catherine E. Mosher, Ph.D., of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, and Sharon Danoff-Burg, Ph.D., of University at Albany, State University of New York, in 2006 recruited 421 college students. Two written questionnaires typically used to screen for [alcohol abuse](#) or substance-related disorders were modified to evaluate students for addiction to [indoor tanning](#). Participants were also assessed using standardized measures of anxiety, depression and substance use.

Among 229 participants who had used indoor tanning facilities, the average number of visits during the past year was 23. A total of 90 (39.3 percent) met criteria for tanning addiction on one measure and 70 (30.6 percent) met criteria on the other measure. Students who did meet these

criteria were more likely to report symptoms of anxiety and use of alcohol, marijuana and other substances than those who did not meet these criteria.

"If associations between affective factors and indoor tanning behavior are replicated, results suggest that treating an underlying [mood disorder](#) may be a necessary step in reducing [skin cancer](#) risk among those who frequently tan indoors," the authors write. "Researchers have hypothesized that those who tan regularly year round may require more intensive intervention efforts, such as motivational interviewing, relative to those who tan periodically in response to mood changes or special events."

"Further research should evaluate the usefulness of incorporating a brief anxiety and depression screening for individuals who tan indoors. Patients with anxiety or depression could be referred to mental health professionals for diagnosis and treatment."

More information: Arch Dermatol. 2010;146[4]:412-417.

Provided by JAMA and Archives Journals

Citation: Study suggests indoor tanning may be an addictive behavior (2010, April 19) retrieved 9 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-04-indoor-tanning-addictive-behavior.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.
