



New product testing technique takes the guesswork out of sun protection.

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Researchers have succeeded in developing the first verifiable technique to accurately measure the effects of UVA, UVB and visible light on the skin, allowing more accurate testing and labelling of skin protection creams and lotions.

Substance of release

With the growth in fatal skin cancers, the current confusing labelling of skin-protection products makes it almost impossible to know whether you are adequately protecting yourself and your family from the harmful effects of the sun. The EU has recognised that this needs to change, and is in the process of establishing Europe-wide standards that will provide comprehensive information on the protection ability of products. With these developments underway, this breakthrough testing process comes at exactly the right moment.

Up until now, testing of sun protection products has involved volunteers trying out products, with no way of accurately comparing their effectiveness on a 'control sample'. The new technique developed by RAFT, a medical research charity, moves far beyond the current standards. Utilising skin samples, the RAFT technique provides accurate comparison data that means, for the first time, accurate and meaningful labelling is possible.

An important early discovery has been that even the way creams are applied can have a major effect on their protection abilities, a factor that was not understood even by product manufacturers. RAFT has discovered that, while SPF labels refer to UVB protection, if the cream is badly applied, the level of protection can drop dramatically, and the SPF label provides no information on protection against UVA rays, which can be equally damaging.

RAFT hopes that by applying this testing process, a new generation of more effective sun creams will be developed, and is working with UCL Business to license the technique to manufacturers worldwide.

Ends.

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RAFT

The Restoration of Appearance and Function Trust (RAFT) is a medical research charity established in 1988 by a small group of Consultant Plastic Surgeons based in Middlesex, UK, with a desire to produce 'translational research' i.e. designed to marry clinical need with scientific research thus moving from scientific theory to the clinical setting and giving hope to countless patients whose lives have been devastated by burns, accidents, cancers, trauma or birth defects. www.raft.ac.uk

Further Information

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For more information on UCL's commercialisation of research please visit the UCL Business website at www.uclb.com