

## **RAFT's Position on Sun Damage – 4 September 2009**

During the last 10 years RAFT has been carrying out research into understanding the role sunlight plays in contributing to skin cancer and finding ways of improving the protection currently available to the public and searching for a cure for skin cancer. Our expertise has been recognised worldwide with RAFT contributing to both EU and USA legislation on sunscreens regarding UVA damage.

With the levels of skin cancer increasing rapidly to the point that it is now the most common cancer in the under 35s, RAFT believes it is essential that the public have the necessary information to make informed choices about how they tan. RAFT's research has shown that the public don't necessarily have the right information on keeping safe whilst tanning.

Whilst it is important to get some sunlight on unprotected skin in order for the body to produce Vitamin D, it doesn't require spending hours of sunbathing or using a sun bed. In fact, sun beds have recently been reclassified as carcinogenic and it has been proved that regular use of a sunbed under the age of 30 can increase the chances of getting skin cancer by 75%. RAFT shares the concerns of many other organisations about young people having access to sunbeds and supports the call for a ban on under 18s using sunbeds.

RAFT is concerned that the public are not sufficiently protected in the sunshine. RAFT research shows that rubbing in sunscreens decreases the protection available to almost zero. To ensure protection they should either not rub in the sunscreen or apply two layers. RAFT's research has also shown that it is important to ensure that the sunscreens you buy provides both UVB (measured by the SPF factor) and UVA protection. Unfortunately no sunscreen on the market currently protects against visible light.

Some people are more susceptible to sunlight damage and are therefore are more at risk when sun bathing than others.

RAFT is developing technology with the aim of improving protection for people so that anyone sitting in the sun can do so in the safe knowledge that they are fully protected.

All this work is neither Government nor industry funded. RAFT is a registered UK charity and depends on donations from the public to carry out its research. The need for our research is urgent. To decrease the time it will take us to get the results to the public, RAFT will be launching a £1m Skin Cancer Research Fund to raise sufficient funds to allow us to carry out the research as soon as possible.

These funds could help save many lives by helping RAFT to complete their research. Research underway includes:

- The development of a screening test so that people can identify their own risk and take appropriate measures to protect themselves.
- Full protection to the skin against natural light
- A cure for early stage skin cancer