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RAFT calls for better awareness of the dangers of UV radiation

RAFT would like to applaud those who have supported the Governments plan to ban under-18s from using sunbeds, due to the potentially lethal after effects of their use.

Sunbeds are now known to have the capacity to emit very high levels of UV radiation, many times stronger than the midday summer sun in most countries, and a person using a sunbed before the age of 35 increases their risk of developing skin cancer by up to 75%.

RAFT CEO, Leonor Stjepic states, "Banning under-18s from using sunbeds will work to an extent, but RAFT would like to call for better education and awareness of the dangers of UV radiation. If steps were made to educate parents, in schools, and young people what using a sunbed actually does to your skin, maybe they would not be so keen to use them."

RAFT commends figures such as Nicola Roberts, of Girls Aloud, and Sandra Mcclumpha, of Fake Bake, for their campaigning and work to raise awareness of such an important issue.

Melanoma is now the most common cancer in young people aged 15-34, and kills more than 2000 people a year, that is five people dying of melanoma in the UK every day. This form of Skin Cancer is totally preventable – 98% of skin cancer cases are as a result of over exposure to the sun or sun beds.

For a number of years RAFT has been undertaking research on the role of UV light on skin and its contribution to skin cancer. Through this research RAFT has been working on finding a non-surgical treatment for skin cancer. However, we believe that prevention is the most effective cure and anything that contributes to preventing skin cancer must be supported.

RAFT is a strong supporter of Fake Bake's "Save Your Skin" campaign, which is calling for a ban on coin operated tanning kiosks, and presently has over 12,700 supporters. With these coin operated sunbeds still available on the high street, banning under-18s will have a limited impact, if they still have access to unmanned tanning salons.

With 67,000 new cases of skin cancer every year in the UK alone, fighting for such causes is very important. Over 1,800 people die from melanoma each year, that is 5

people per day. Educating people about the reality of skin cancer should be a high priority. Facts such as, melanoma being one of the most difficult cancer to treat, being resistant to radio- and chemotherapy, should be common knowledge and taught from a very young age. Information regarding skin cancer and other health issues should be provided by appropriate and reliable figure and authorities.

Often what is regarded as common knowledge is in fact incorrect, skin damage can, and does, occur when the skin does not burn. So those who continue to use sunbeds thinking that they are not damaging their skin, because they are not burning are causing long lasting damage to their health.

RAFT again would like to welcome the call for a ban on under-18s using sunbeds, and happily supports all those who are raising awareness of the dangers of skin cancer. "To those who are campaigning to fight skin cancer, and wish to raise awareness of the cancer, we invite you to please contact RAFT and together we can help beat this deadly disease."

www.raft.ac.uk
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