

Sun protection, skin cancer prevention and detection

Project details

Full project title: Skin protection, skin cancer prevention and detection

Sponsor: [The South West Public Health Observatory](#)

BSMC team: [Gill Kemp](#), [Simon Jones](#) and [Rebecca Hughes](#)

Project summary

Background

Rising melanoma rates in the South-West region requires specific targeted action to address ways of improving sun protection strategies and early detection of skin cancers.

The research

The start point was to provide a literature review of both academic and consumer literature from which to draft social marketing strategy for sun protection activity in the South West region.

In order to obtain specific data to inform the review and possible revision of existing strategies, a series of focus groups were conducted in the Cornwall region, covering a range of topics relating to past sun protection behaviours and future intentions; knowledge, attitudes and beliefs regarding sun protection and skin cancer detection strategies; perceived norms, and influences; information sources and preferences as well as a critique of existing sun protection/skin cancer prevention and detection material (including possible evaluation of alternative message framing).

Results

The research identified relevant theoretical foundations along with the characteristics of specific target segments and preliminary insights into probable behavioural triggers likely to 'move and motivate' members of each segment to change their behaviour.

There are numerous confounding factors which impact on sun protection messages, particularly in relation to debates regarding adequate vitamin D levels and the use of sunbeds. The biggest challenge to moves to change sun protection behaviours is the strength of social norms regarding the desirability of acquiring a suntan.

These norms are so strong across all sectors of the population, but particularly among teenagers and young adults, that messages challenging tanning behaviour are likely to be rejected. In the short term, it is recommended that the focus for young people should be on strategies for tanning safely. Outdoor workers also present specific challenges in relation to worksite sun protection facilities.

Developed by the South West Public Health Observatory, [The Skin Cancer Hub](#) website promotes the prevention and early diagnosis of skin cancer.

Project outputs

The BSMC team provided an overview of relevant context and policy issues in 2008, with additional analysis undertaken in conjunction with both qualitative and quantitative research conducted in early 2009. The reports, prepared for the SWPHO can be accessed from the following links:

- [Social Marketing-Based Strategy for Sun Protection Interventions](#)
- [Strategy for Cornwall PCT](#)
- [Quantitative Benchmark](#)

Publications

- Eagle, L., Kemp, G., Jones, S., Hawkins, J., Bulmer, S., Verne, J. (2011). Sun Protection: North and South – A Comparison of Attitudes and Behaviours of Young Adults in the United Kingdom and New Zealand. Paper presented at the South West Public Health Scientific Conference, February.
- Eagle, L.C., Kemp, G. and Verne, J. (2010). Mass media barriers to social marketing interventions: The example of sun protection. *Health Promotion International* advance access August, pp. 1–10.
- Jones, S., Eagle, L., Kemp, G., Scammell, K., Naumann, L. and Hiom, S. (2011). Segmentation Strategies for Strengthening Sun Protection Behaviours within the UK. World Social Marketing Conference, Dublin, April 2011
- Kemp, G., Eagle, L.C (2009). The Bronze Debate: Looking Gold verses Getting Old. Presented at the 8th International Congress of the International Association on Public and Non-profit Marketing, Valencia.
- Kemp, G., Eagle, L.C. and Verne, J. (2010). The bronze debate: Looking gold verses getting old. *Journal of Research for Consumers*. 6(1): 1–6