Reviewer’s report

Title: Intentional tanning behaviors among undergraduates on the United States' Gulf Coast

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Reviewer: Carolyn Heckman

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This paper describes outdoor, indoor, and sunless tanning rates and correlates among a large sample of undergrads from a university in Mobile, Alabama.

Abstract

1. "Exposure to ultraviolet radiation from intentional tanning practices is a major contributor to this epidemic." - Please change "is" to "may be" or "is likely".

2. "Southern and coastal regions have higher melanoma mortality rates among non-Hispanic whites …" - higher than who or what?

Intro: The justification for the focus on the Southern Gulf Coast would be strengthened if data were provided for the reasons given.

Methods

1. Please provide the tanning items that were used so the reader knows how tanning and current tanning were defined, especially since this was noted as a critique of the existing literature. For example, was ST professional, self-applied, or both?

2. The paper would be strengthened if the cognitive variables were included. If not, perhaps they should not be mentioned.

Results: Seem fine.

Discussion

1. Please note that the higher findings of current OT are likely due to the proximity of the university to the beach.

2. Use ST or STP consistently.

4. "We found that females were significantly more likely to IT than males, consistent with previous small population studies [12, 15, 21, 35] ..." This is one of the most common findings in this area in studies of all sizes.

5. "... but this is the first report of ST usage among a large adolescent and young adult population." Please cite the following study with regard to combination tanning, which included 4,601 18-34 year olds: J Am Acad Dermatol. 2007 Mar;56(3):387-90. Epub 2006 Oct 20. Prevalence of sunless tanning product use and related behaviors among adults in the United States: results from a national survey. Stryker JE1, Yaroch AL, Moser RP, Atienza A, Glanz K.

6. Not sure combination tanning is an emerging trend, though it may be understudied.

7. The study population may be prime candidates for interventions, but not necessarily educational ones since several studies have shown that many tanners are aware of the risks and that educational interventions alone are not effective.

Table 1.

1. Consider at least for descriptive purposes dividing the category of 22+ into 22 and 23+ since that is typically above college age.

2. Suggest commenting on the fact that participants likely underestimated their skin sensitivity since most were white, but few were skin type I or II.

Tables 2-4: Suggest denoting significance visually (e.g., bolding).

Please correct typos throughout.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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