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SUN SAFETY INK!

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Background: Numbers of new melanomas, a lethal skin cancer, are increasing. Similarly, the rates of new basal cell carcinomas, the most common form of human cancer, are increasing. Data suggest that most of these cancers can be prevented by reducing unprotected sun exposure and avoidance of artificial ultraviolet light. The percentage of adults who report being sunburned at least once has increased. Although 60 -70% of adults say they protect from the sun, the use of protective measures has changed little.

Rates of receiving new tattoos are increasing, such that 21% of US adults have at least one tattoo. Tattoo artists often advise clients to protect newly applied tattoos from the sun.

Aim: To gather data on the potential of using tattoo artists and tattoo studios to promote full body comprehensive sun protection in order to prevent skin cancer.

Methods: Establishment of an expert advisory board of skin cancer experts and tattoo salon owners. Development of measures to assess sun safety practices and attitudes among the tattooed population using an on-line survey

Results: Excellent cross-fertilization of ideas between skin cancer experts, other researchers and tattoo salon owners, resulted in buy-in to the idea from the tattoo salon owners and operators and the formation of an easily understood survey about sun protection practices.

Conclusions: Based on the survey and other formative research, prototype materials will be developed and pilot testing implemented in two tattoo parlors in preparation for a more widespread randomized control trial for further evaluation.