

Press Release

Spanish dermatologists reconsider their position on sunbathing

Brussels, 23rd of October 2009 (ESA) – **Against the backdrop of the ever increasing reports of vitamin D deficiency, dermatologists are reconsidering their position on sunbathing. “In countries that have very strict regulations on sunbed use, dermatologists now are realising that their advice to the public to strictly avoid UV might have been over the top and that this will put the population at high risk for Vitamin D deficiency”, states Christina Lorenz, the Chairperson of the European Sunlight Association (ESA). These were the conclusions drawn at a recent press conference held at the XXI Reunión Nacional de Dermatología Cosmética (National Cosmetic Dermatology Meeting) the key lies in moderate UV exposure.**

During the press conference, Julián Conejo-Mir, the President of the “Academia Española de Dermatología” (Spanish Academy of Dermatology), revealed that dermatologists are going through a period of “reconsideration”, that he described as “very positive”, with regard to their position on sun exposure, after detecting a worrying deficiency of vitamin D among the general population. The head of the Academy of Dermatology extolled the virtues of vitamin D to the point where he stated that “the only good impact that climate change will have is that it will give us a chance to take in more vitamin D from the sun”. Vitamin D, he explained, plays an important role for our immune systems and is a source of anti-cancer activity against colon, prostate and breast cancer.

Esteban Parra, professor of Anthropology at the University of Toronto, and specialist in human pigmentation, added that it has beneficial effects against autoimmune diseases, and cited multiple sclerosis as an example. To gain the sufficient level of vitamin D in our bodies, added Professor Parra, having the correct diet is not enough; we must also sunbathe or, in countries where this is not possible, turn to supplements. However, he warned that these two factors should not be abused because they could become toxic.

In short, the key, according to the conclusions of the dermatologists, is sunbathing in moderation, finding the balance between the required dosage to take in vitamin D and not sunbathing too much leading to burning. “Finding this balance is not easy”, they both acknowledged. What Conejo-Mir did state, however, is that dermatologists “perhaps shouldn’t send out such an extremist message” when recommending sun protection, as vitamin D is also a positive element when fighting against melanoma.

The XXI Reunión Nacional de Dermatología Cosmética (National Cosmetic Dermatology Meeting), took place from 1st to 3rd October 2009 in Logroño, Spain.

The European Sunlight Association (ESA) is the European umbrella organisation for the tanning industry and represents 28 national associations and companies from 15 EU member states, Norway, Switzerland, Russia and USA. It is based in Belgium. ESA promotes a responsible message about moderate tanning and sunburn prevention.

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