POSITION STATEMENT ON USING SUN PROTECTION

INTRODUCTION

The International Society of Plastic and Aesthetic Nurses (ISPAN) supports the practice of lifelong sun protection. Excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun is associated with accelerated or premature aging of the skin and has been shown to dramatically affect the “mechanical integrity” of the skin (Berkey, Biniek, & Daukshardt, 2017, p. 270). Additionally, there is a link between UVR exposure and skin cancer (Lushniak, 2014). The majority of skin cancer cases can be prevented if UVR exposure is minimized (Mays & Kraemer, 2015).

Skin cancer has been identified as the most common malignant disease in the United States (National Cancer Institute, 2018). Because the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018) reports that approximately 70,000 people are diagnosed with melanoma each year in the United States, and 4.3 million adults are treated for nonmelanoma skin cancers annually (as cited in Qin, Holman, Jones, Berkowitz, & Guy Jr, 2018), the message of lifelong sun protection is strongly advocated by ISPAN.

RATIONALE

Supporting lifelong sun protection is consistent with the mission of the ISPAN. Plastic and aesthetic registered nurses (RNs) are in a position to utilize evidence-based practice that promotes healthy lifestyle choices and prevents the development of diseases such as skin cancer.

Despite the fact that most cases of skin cancer can be prevented with efforts to protect against UVR, skin cancer represents the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States (Lushniak, 2014; Mays & Tercyak, 2015). Skin cancer affects patients and their families physically, psychologically, and financially.

Its impact is also felt on an international level, with treatment costs ranking among the most expensive cancers in multiple health systems (Gordon et al., 2017). The practice of implementing lifelong sun protection promotes healthy lifestyles for health care consumers.

ISPAN RECOMMENDATIONS
The plastic and aesthetic RN should

- Implement sun protection strategies and educate patients to implement the following strategies for sun protection:
  - Apply broad spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen to all exposed skin in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions for use.
  - Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside (The Skin Cancer Foundation, 2018).
  - Apply sunscreen to areas of the body that may be missed, particularly on the face (Pratt et al., 2017).
  - Apply sunscreen with the minimally acceptable sun protection factor (SPF) of 15.
  - Use a water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or greater for extended outdoor activity (The Skin Cancer Foundation, 2018).
  - Reapply sunscreen every two hours or more frequently if swimming or if excessively sweating (The Skin Cancer Foundation, 2018).
  - Not allow infants under 6 months to be exposed to UV light. Use sunscreens on individuals 6 months or older (The Skin Cancer Foundation, 2018).
  - Use sun protective garments and accessories, including
    - sunglasses that block UVA/UVB rays,
    - clothing with ultraviolet protective factor (UPF), and
    - hats with a brim that shades the face, ears and the back of the neck (The Skin Cancer Foundation, 2018).
  - Avoid sunlight, especially during the peak hours of 10AM to 4PM (The Skin Cancer Foundation, 2018).
  - Avoid unnecessary exposure to UVR, including the use of tanning beds (Qin et al., 2018).

REFERENCES


**DISCLAIMER**

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