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Abstract

Sun protection behavior and sunburns among Arizona adults

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Objective

To examine the prevalence of sun protection behaviors and sunburn history among adults in a region of the United States with high ultraviolet radiation exposure.

Design and Setting

Data on self-reported sun protection and sunburns were obtained using supplemental questions added to the 2013 Arizona Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey. 3,370 Arizona adults over the age of 18 years completed questions about use of sunscreen and protective clothing and reported sunburns within past 12 months. Weighted analyses were used; odds ratios (OR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) were calculated.

Results

Approximately 20% of Arizona adults reported they protected their skin with sunscreen or protective clothing every time when going outdoors; however, among those aged 18-24 years, this percentage dropped to 8%. Additionally, 28% reported they experienced one or more sunburns in the past 12 months. Females were more likely to protect their skin (OR 2.06, 95%CI:1.47-2.87) than males. Binge drinking and heavy alcohol consumption were associated with a decreased likelihood of sun protection in males (OR 0.48, 95%CI: 0.27-0.83 and OR 0.32, 95%CI: 0.14-0.72, respectively), but not females. A recent history of sunburns was associated with being non-Hispanic white and a history of indoor tanning.

Conclusions

A large percentage of Arizona adults are not adequately protecting themselves from the sun. Factors related to use of sun protection are not always the same as those related to sunburns. Comprehensive tailored approaches to skin cancer prevention are needed.