

## Adolescent sun exposure and sun protection behaviour during secondary school athletic events



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25 years of social & behavioural research in cancer control



### Methods

- Unobtrusive observation of student & staff sun protection and the physical environment at 10 secondary school sports days
- Counts made systematically using pre-determined methods
- Outcome measures
  - School provision of SPF30+ broad spectrum sunscreen
  - Sun protective hat (bucket, legionnaires, broad brimmed)
  - Clothing coverage (below the knee, below the elbow)
  - Availability and type of shade
  - Sunglass use



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### Results

- UVI more than double the level at which sun protection is recommended (average temperature about 20° C)
- 50% of schools provided SPF30+ broad spectrum sunscreen
- Shade cover for students not generally available at specific events
- Large proportion of time spent in the competition arena waiting to compete
- Sun protection practices of students very poor
- Sun protection practices of staff better than students but still not optimal
- Students more likely to wear a sun-protective hat on days when cloud cover was less than 50% ( $p < 0.05$ )

	Number	Sunglasses	Sun-protective hat	Coverage below the elbow	Coverage below knee
	n	%	%	%	%
Students	1225	1.7	3.4	19.0	21.4
Officials	215	4.2	25.2	49.3	59.5

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### Recommendations

- Portable shade (e.g. gazebos) available at each event – for use while waiting to compete
- Student encouraged to wear sun protective hats and clothing while waiting to compete
- SPF30+ broad spectrum sunscreen should be provided
- Staff should role model the correct use of sun protective items
- Potential to change environment/practices: council owned facility used by schools



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