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

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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

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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Sunglasses</th>
<th>Sun-protective hat</th>
<th>Coverage below the elbow</th>
<th>Coverage below knee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>1225</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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