

Patient education as the main target in skin cancer prevention: Knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards sun exposure and use of sun protection

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Background

Skin cancer is a global public health problem. As the main risk factor is unprotected exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR), it is reasonable to develop methods and strategies based on education of the population regarding photoprotection. We aim to describe information about knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding sun exposure and sun protection use in patients attending a dermatologic center in Bogotá, Colombia. We aim to describe attitudes and practices regarding the use of sunscreen, and also describe patient's knowledge regarding sun exposure and sun protection use

Materials and Methods

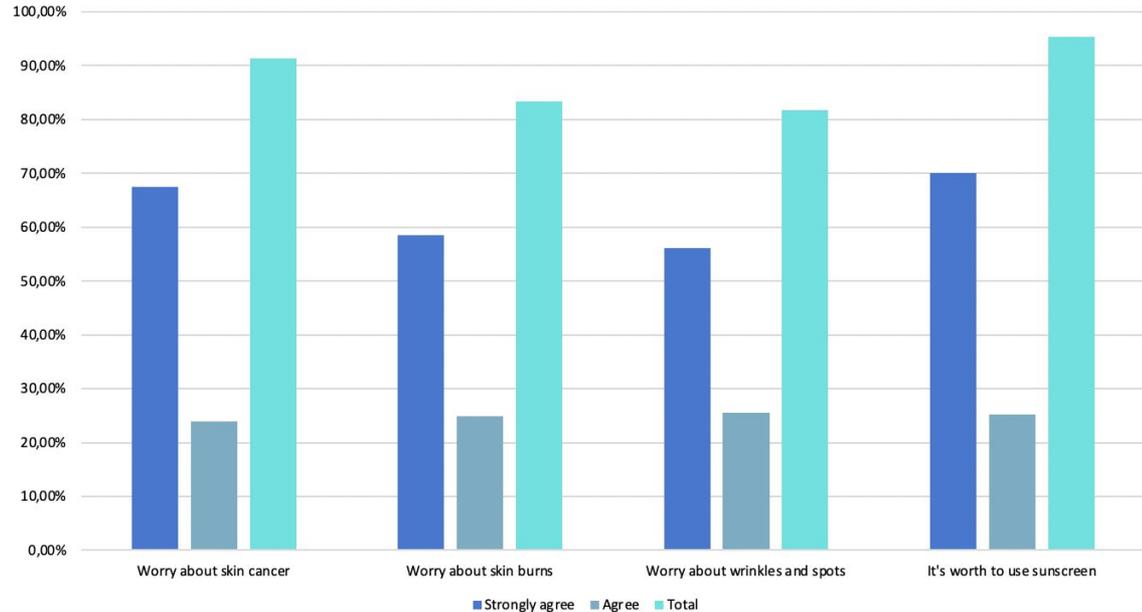
We conducted a cross-sectional study. Data was collected during August 2021 applying the "CHACES" questionnaire to patients from a dermatologic center in Bogotá, Colombia. It collected demographic information, and data about knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding sun protection. Analysis was conducted using Epi-Info 7.

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Results

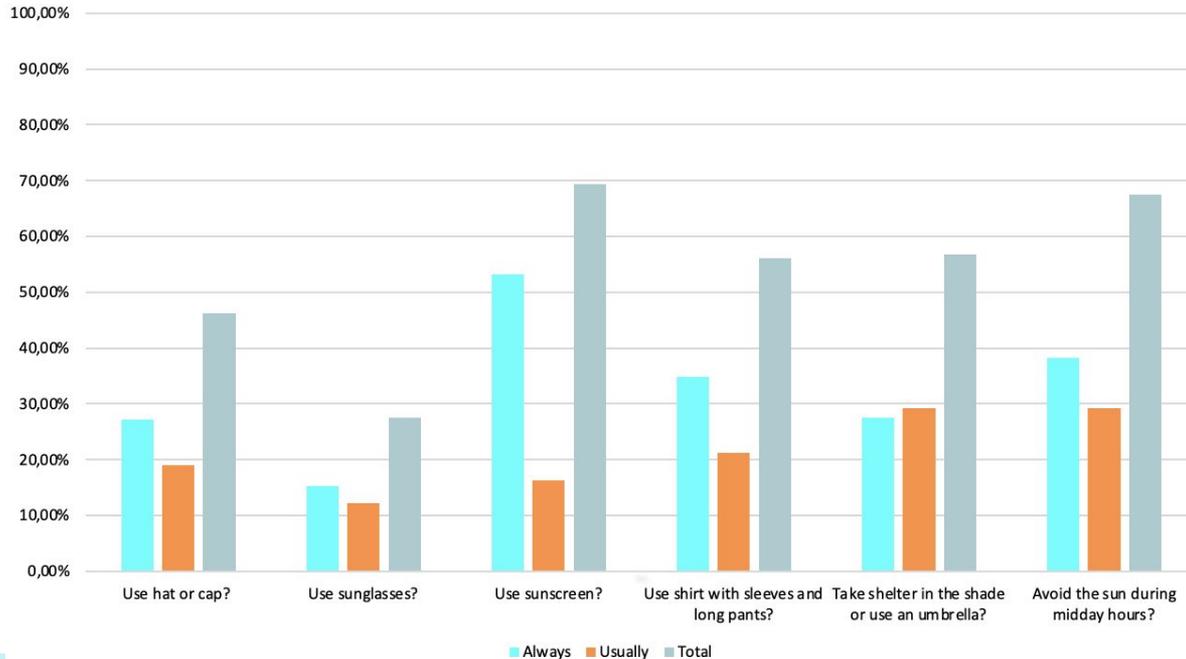
Of 245 patients, 61.63% (n=151) were women. Mean age was 46.81 years. It was found that 68.97% (n=169) of the 121 reported regular use of sunscreen. Two thirds (67.34%) of the patients claimed to avoid sun exposure during midday hours (12:00-16:00). It was found that 85.71% (n=210), 84.08% (n=206) and 91.83% (n=225) were concerned about sunburn, developing spots or wrinkles, and having skin cancer, respectively. Almost every individual (95.92%) considered it worthy to use sunscreen. Almost half of the sample (49.39%) recognized that dark-colored clothes protect more from UVR than light-colored clothes, and 79.18% believed it is necessary to take at least one hour of sun exposure to achieve adequate vitamin D levels.

Concerns about effects of sun exposure



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Use of sun protection measures



Conclusions

Despite recognizing effective solar protection measures as prevention for skin cancer, people in countries with high UV index encounter an evident lack of knowledge and misconceptions, highlighting the importance of public health policies focused on patient education and primary prevention of skin cancer.

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