

# SunSmart Behaviours – Outdoor Socialisers

## Background

The Health Promotion Agency/Te Hiringa Hauora (HPA) has undertaken qualitative research to provide insight into attitudes, awareness, and concern toward ultra-violet radiation (UVR) and SunSmart behaviours. Young adult outdoor socialisers, 18 to 24-year-olds participating in outdoor activities such as attending concerts, sports events, and going to the beach, were the focus of this research. This group is at particularly high risk of sun exposure.<sup>1</sup>

## Exploring outdoor socialisers SunSmart attitudes/behaviours

- HPA contracted Research First to carry out qualitative research using intercept interviews across New Zealand.
- A total of 163 participants of mixed genders and primarily aged under 30 years were interviewed during the summertime at the beach and at large outdoor events across New Zealand.
- 71% of the participants were 18 to 24-years-old, 27% were 25 to 30-years-old and 2% were 31 to 45-years-old.
- Young couples and single 18 to 24-year-olds were interviewed at urban events in Christchurch.
- Families were targeted at cricket matches in Christchurch and Wellington, and at beaches in Tauranga and Blenheim.
- All interviews took place at events between December 2018 and February 2019.

## Summary of typical attitudes and behaviours

### SunSmart behaviours

Almost all of the interviewed participants (91%) currently engaged in at least one form of SunSmart behaviour on the day they were interviewed.

All participants (regardless of their SunSmart behaviour on the day) were asked which SunSmart behaviours they would commonly engage in. Commonly reported behaviours were sunscreen (90%), sunglasses (72%), hats (53%), shade (50%), and long sleeves (15%). Current SunSmart behaviours were similar to common SunSmart behaviours for all participants except sitting in the shade (only 22% for current behaviours).

When asked the main reason participants used SunSmart behaviours, the most common answers were to avoid sunburn and to protect from skin cancer. Females were more likely to use SunSmart behaviours than males.

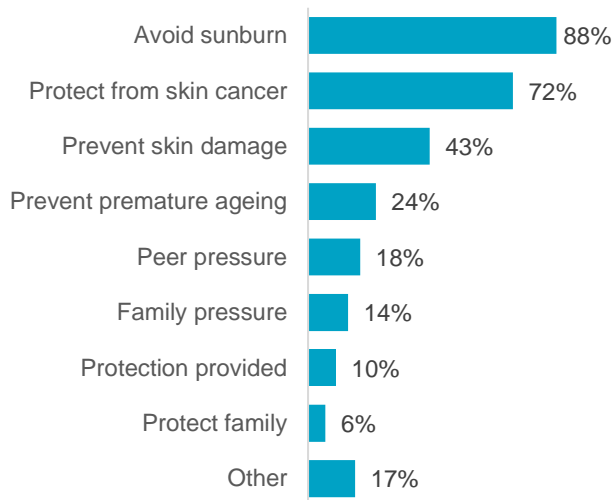
People were more engaged in SunSmart behaviours on sunny days compared with cloudy days.

Advertising messages such as Slip, Slip, Slop, Slap, and Wrap were well known to participants.

<sup>1</sup> Johns Hopkins Medicine. (2012, May 8). Skin cancer increasingly common in teens and young adults. *ScienceDaily*.

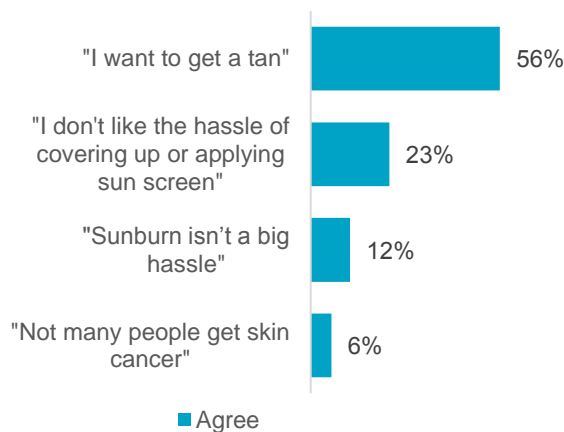
## Motivators for SunSmart behaviours

When asked for the main reason for using SunSmart behaviours, the most common responses were to avoid sunburn and protect from skin cancer.



## Barriers for SunSmart behaviours

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements about why they would not be SunSmart. Wanting to get a tan and the hassle of applying sunscreen were the top barriers against being SunSmart.



**About 40% of people (n=68) were not wearing sunglasses when interviewed.** Of these 68 people, 26% said they had forgotten or lost their sunglasses. 15% said they didn't own any, and 10% said it was cloudy. Other responses were centred on fashion and expense of sunglasses.

**About 40% of people (n=65) were not wearing hats when interviewed.** Of these 65 people, 26% said they were not wearing a hat for aesthetic or fashion reasons, followed by 24% having forgotten to bring a hat or could not find one.

## UVR awareness

- Overall, two-thirds of outdoor socialisers interviewed were aware of UVR. Awareness of UVR increased with age from 52% in those under 20–years-old, to 69% in those aged 21 to 30.
- Only 8% of people said they would use UVR to help them decide whether to protect themselves from the sun at an outdoor event. Most people used the amount of sun and lack of cloud (83%) or the heat (52%) to decide if they should be SunSmart.
- When asked where they would go to learn more about UVR, 44% of people either did not answer or did not know. 33% would do an internet search, while 12% of respondents would use MetService and weather apps. Māori and Pasifika were most likely to find out about UVR at surf clubs (25% versus 4% for other ethnicities).

## Summary

The research findings identified that despite outdoor socialisers having a high awareness of identified/known SunSmart behaviours, it does not always translate into using SunSmart behaviours. The long-term behavioural benefits (adopting SunSmart behaviours) are being overridden by short-term considerations (choosing to tan/look good/be more comfortable).

The research showed that while knowledge of UV risk could be improved, many people already know about UV risk, and the behaviours to reduce UV exposure. Regardless of this knowledge, many people are still not motivated to adopt these behaviours. Similarly, while many people are aware of UVR risk, few are using UVR information to help them decide to engage in SunSmart behaviours.

Citation: Kingstone, S. & Nicolson, M. (2020). Sunsmart Behaviours – Outdoor Socialisers. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency/Te Hiringa Hauroa.