



# Sunbed habits of children and young people in Denmark 2012

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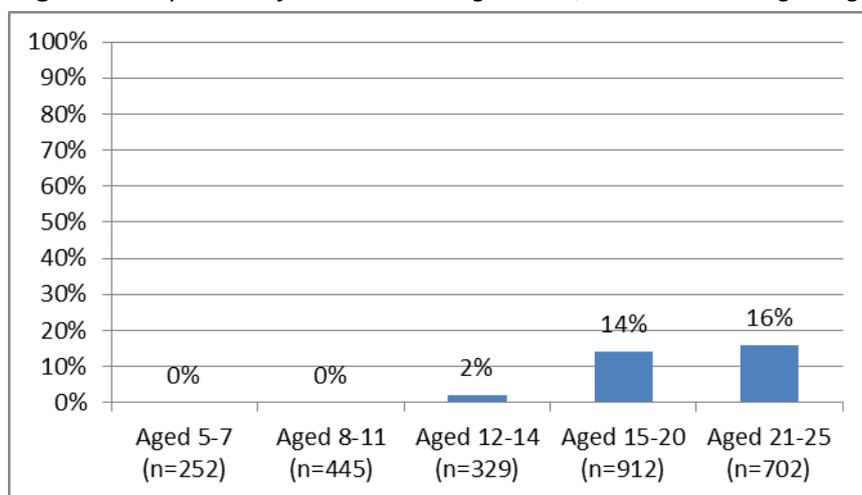
Danish title: "Børn og unges solarievener 2012 – en kortlægning"

## Summary

### Use of sunbeds among 5-25-year-olds

Very few children use sunbeds and many children do not even know what a sunbed is. The proportion of sunbed users increases greatly between the age groups 12-14 and 15-20.

Figure A. Proportion of sunbed users aged 5-25, shown according to age<sup>1</sup>.



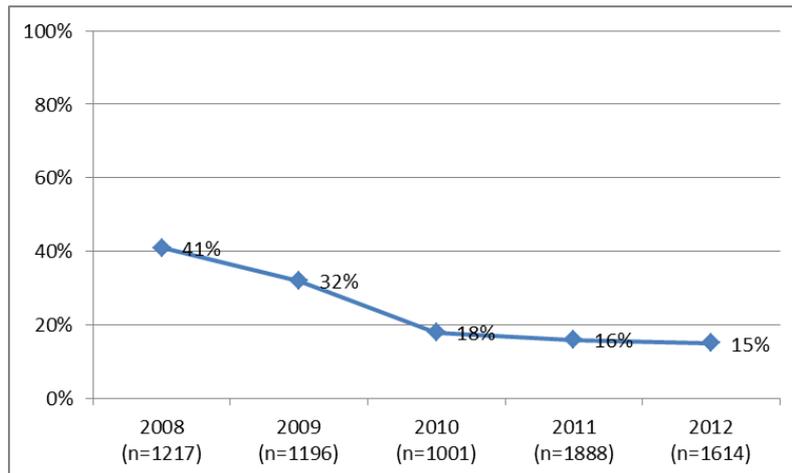
Sunbed use is more widespread among girls aged 15-25 than among boys of the same age. Furthermore, there are no regional differences in the proportion of sunbed users aged 15-25.

### Development in the proportion of sunbed users aged 15-25

The proportion of sunbed users aged 15-25 has decreased from 41% in 2008 to 15% in 2012. However, there has been no significant development from 2011 to 2012 (see figure B). The proportion of young people who have *never* used a sunbed has increased. In 2008, this proportion was 34% and in 2012 it reached 57% of young people.

<sup>1</sup> Information about the sunbed habits of adult Danes (aged 25-64) can be found in the report "Sunbed habits of adult Danes 2012" (only available in Danish).

**Figure B. Development in the proportion of sunbed users aged 15-25, 2008-2012**



### **Future plans to use sunbeds**

16% of young people aged 15-25 expect to use a sunbed in the future. The proportion that expects to use a sunbed in the future has risen from 2011 to 2012.

The vast majority of those who expect to use a sunbed in the future are current sunbed users, and much has to happen before they will change their behaviour:

- Many state that they will not change their behaviour until either they or someone close to them is affected by skin cancer.
- It is also clear that being tanned is important for young people, as many state that they will reduce or stop their sunbed use when there are better alternatives for getting a tan.

### **Sunbed debut**

52% of young people aged 15-25 who are current or former sunbed users started using sunbeds before the age of 15. In general, girls start using sunbeds earlier than boys. From 2011 to 2012, the average age for starting to use sunbeds has fallen.

### **Reasons given for using sunbeds correspond with the stated benefits of sunbed use**

Reasons given by sunbed users for using sunbeds correspond to a large degree with the benefits they state regarding sunbed use. The reasons and benefits are mainly linked to cosmetic factors (being tanned looks good) and well-being (it is relaxing, and gives a better mood and sense of well-being). Unsurprisingly, more non-sunbed users than sunbed users state that there are no benefits to be gained from sunbed use.

### **The reasons given for not using sunbeds correspond with the stated disadvantages of sunbed use**

Both those who have never used sunbeds and former sunbed users were asked why they do not use sunbeds. The responses from the two groups were similar. The responses were also similar to the responses given to the question regarding the disadvantages of sunbed use. The risk of illness in the form of melanoma and regular skin cancer were the most significant, but cosmetic reasons were also stated (e.g. sunbeds give an unnatural colour tan).

It is noteworthy that among both sunbed users and non-sunbed users only around 1-2% state that there are no disadvantages associated with sunbed use.

### **Sunbed use as a social phenomenon**

The sunbed use of young people is associated with the sunbed use of their friends and their parents. Young people, whose friends and/or parents use sunbeds are more likely to use sunbeds themselves than young people whose friends and/or parents do not use sunbeds.

The majority of young people also go with someone when they use sunbeds.

### **Young people's knowledge and perception of the risk of sunbed use**

Most young people know that sunbed use is harmful to health – regardless of frequency of use. Nevertheless, three out of ten (30%) young sunbed users state that they do not believe their own sunbed use carries a health risk because they use sunbeds so infrequently.

### **Sunbed use, knowledge and attitudes among mothers aged 40-50**

15% of mothers aged 40-50 with children aged 12-18 have used a sunbed during the past year. Mothers experience the same benefits and disadvantages regarding sunbed use as young people aged 15-25. The proportion of mothers who know that sunbed use is harmful to health, regardless of how infrequently sunbeds are used, corresponds to the proportion of those aged 15-25 who are aware of this.

### **Parental attitudes to their child's sunbed use**

Three out of four young sunbed users state that one or both of their parents know about their sunbed use. Among those parents who know about their sunbed use, 60% of mothers and 42% of fathers think it is acceptable that they use sunbeds.

Among mothers aged 40-50 who have children aged 12-18 who use sunbeds, 59% respond that they think it is acceptable that their child uses sunbeds. 21% of mothers of non-sunbed using children aged 12-18 state they would be allowed to use a sunbed.

### **Knowledge and attitudes towards a national age limit of 18 for sunbed use**

62% of all young people aged 15-25 know that it is legal for young people aged under 18 to use sunbeds. Only half of mothers (51%) are aware of legislation in this area.

More mothers aged 40-50 (71%) than young people aged 15-25 (57%) believe that children and young people aged under 18 should be banned from using sunbeds. Support for an age limit has fallen from 2011 to 2012 in both groups. In 2011, 64% of young people aged 15-25 supported a ban but in 2012 this figure was 57%. In 2011, 78% of mothers supported a ban while in 2012 this figure was 71%.