



SUNBED HABITS OF THE DANES 2009

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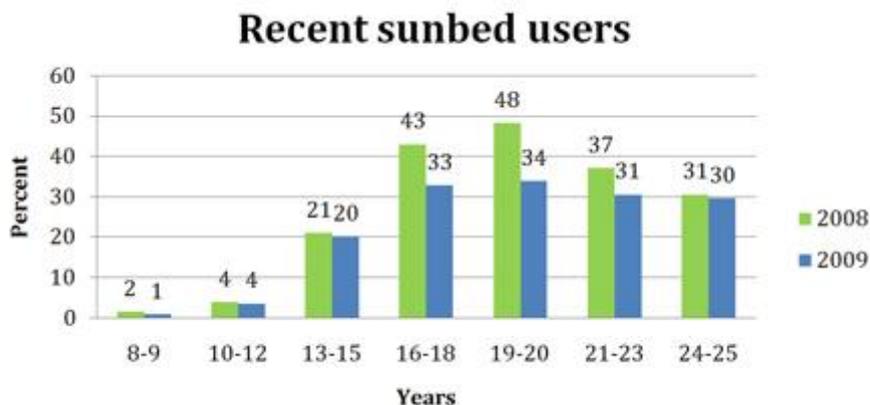
Danish title: "Danskernes solarievaner 2009"

Summary

This report examines the sunbed habits of children and young people in 2009 in Denmark, as well as the attitudes towards sunbed use shown by mothers of teenagers aged between 40-50 years. It is based on four surveys carried out in 2008 and 2009 among children, young people and mothers of teenagers. The aim of the surveys was to analyse the extent of sunbed use among children and young people in Denmark and the population in general.

Respondents who have used a sunbed in the past year shown by age

This diagram shows that sunbed use increases throughout teenage years and peaks among 19-20 year olds. Almost 20% of 13-15 year olds have used a sunbed in the past year rising to 34% of 19-20 year olds. Young girls in particular are heavy users of sunbeds. Almost half (49%) of 19-20 year old girls have used a sunbed within the past year.



Sunbed use is decreasing

Despite sunbed use being relatively common among children and young people, it has been shown to decrease significantly in the period 2008-2009. 40% of 15-25 year olds had used a sunbed in 2008 compared with 32% in 2009. The surveys revealed that sunbed use also varies according to where the respondent lives. In the countryside and in small towns there were more sunbed users than in greater Copenhagen.

Reasons for using or not using sunbeds

The two most common reasons for using a sunbed are cosmetic, 'to get a tan', or 'to feel more attractive'. In addition, around a quarter of respondents said they used a sunbed because of skin complaints. Among

non-sunbed users the most common reason for not using a sunbed was concern about the health risks involved. Over half of all young people distance themselves from using sunbeds on grounds of taste stating that 'It's not my style'.

Young people still do not understand the health risks of modest sunbed use

Even though a great proportion of young people know that using a sunbed can lead to cancer, a significant proportion of young people still believe that only a very heavy use of sunbeds is harmful for health. Figures from 2009 show that 43% of young people believe that there are health risks involved with using a sunbed monthly or less frequently. This is a clear improvement on 2008 when the figure was only 32% of young people.

Future use of sunbeds looks likely to decrease

41% of 15-25 year olds stated in 2008 that they expected to use a sunbed in the future compared with 26% in 2009. The results indicate that the decrease in sunbed use among young people we have seen in the past years will continue in the future.

Our survey shows that two parameters are important for whether or not a young person will use a sunbed in the future. Firstly, knowledge on how often sunbeds have to be used to be harmful for health and secondly a personal risk perception of the health risk involved with their own sunbed use.

Mothers understand there is a link between sunbeds and skin cancer

The majority of 40-50 year old mothers with teenage children (93.6%) know that they increase the risk of skin cancer and melanomas by using sunbeds. At the same time, 41.9% believe that sunbeds are only harmful for health if used weekly or more frequently. These responses indicate that this group understands the connection between sunbed use and skin cancer – but there is still a large proportion of mothers who do not know that even modest sunbed use can be dangerous for health.

Support for a sunbed ban

There is widespread support among mothers of teenagers for a ban on sunbed use for the under 18s. 73.5% of the mothers questioned supported this type of ban while only 17% were against such a ban. In particular, mothers who do not use sunbeds or who have non-sunbed using children supported a ban.