

Press Release

Scientists surprised about the classification of UV radiation and solariums into cancer risk category one

Results of studies, on which the International Agency for Research on Cancer have based their decision, face serious criticism from experts

Veldhoven, 30th July 2009 (SRF) – Scientists and experts react with surprise to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) decision to raise the category of UV radiation and solariums into cancer risk category one. The basis for the decision is an IARC report which looks at the role of vitamin D and UVB radiation in the prevention of skin cancer. It is precisely this IARC study which is strongly questioned by scientists. In particular they criticise the flawed evaluation of the database underlying the report.

William B. Grant and Michael F. Holick two of the most renowned experts worldwide in the field of vitamin D research level considerable criticism at the IARC report. In their articles which appeared in the professional journal "Dermato-Endocrinology" Grant and Holick find fault with the unbalanced composition of the IARC working group responsible for the report and the flawed evaluation of the database underlying the report. "This criticism is all the more serious as IARC findings are often drawn upon as the basis for decisions in health policies like now with the classification of UV radiation and solariums into cancer risk category one," Ad Brand, the speaker of the Sunlight Research Forum (SRF) comments on the statements of both researchers.

In their publications in "Dermato-Endocrinology" Grant and Holick state that the composition of the IARC working group with a 4:1 ratio was set up to the detriment of vitamin D experts. In his contribution William B. Grant comments in detail on in his opinion flawed analyses which can be found in the IARC report. Michael F. Holick supports Grant's statements as "a well thought through and critical review of the (IARC) report which points out many defects in the evaluation of data which the working group's recommendations are built on."

The IARC report should present a comprehensive evaluation of evidence for vitamin D's contribution to reducing the risk of cancer and lists 1368 references. Grant on the other hand asserts in his publication that merely two from a total of seven conclusions drawn in the IARC report actually agree with the data contained in the references. "With regard to the contribution of vitamin D and calcium in preventing cancer the report's conclusions are even weaker than its underlying scientific findings would actually suggest," states Grant.

The Sunlight Research Forum (SRF) is a non profit organisation with the HQ in the Netherlands. It is their goal to make the newest medical and scientific knowledge available to the general public about the effects of moderate UV radiation on people.

Please note:

Grant's and Holick's articles as well as the IARC report "Vitamin D and Cancer" can be downloaded from the SRF website www.sunlightresearchforum.eu.

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