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Sun protection of children-maternal attitudes,knowledge and behaviour

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ABSTRACT

Childhood protection from the sun affords lifetime protection from skin cancer. This cross sectional descriptive study was conducted on 184 mothers in 4 medical waiting rooms in Gauteng. The purpose of the study was to determine mothers' knowledge, attitude and behaviour towards sun protection of their children. Data was collected by means of an anonymous, confidential, self-administered questionnaire. There was a significant correlation between personal behaviour of the mother and behaviour of the use of sun protection on their children.

The majority of mothers purchase a sunscreen of SPF factor > 15. Knowledge often does not transfer into behaviour, with many parents still believing that a suntan is healthy. Mothers' attitudes towards sun protection was positive. Knowing someone with skin cancer does not increase the usage of sun protection. Mothers attain their knowledge of sun protection from magazines and television. Mothers felt they would benefit from more information. Sun avoidance methods need to be taught and the perception of a suntan being healthy needs to be changed in the public media.