

Coolin' Off
Lisa Margetis/Index

Senior Shuvo Saha studies for his graduate exam at the fountain Tuesday evening.

TANNING | New study questions addictive nature of laying out

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The results were printed in the Archives of Dermatology Journal along with examinations of the causes and preventions.

"Unfortunately, it seems likely that a significant percentage of the population will continue to ignore our recommendations for minimizing lifetime UV exposure and, worse, that a substantial number will continue to intentionally seek UV exposure for the purpose of cosmetic tanning," the article stated.

The article did not, however, condemn the habit completely, and maintained a positive outlook on the matter, considering skin protection and behavioral intervention.

Higgins said people should balance their time in the sun.

"We all know sun exposure without protection does increase our risk of skin cancer," Higgins said. "The scary thing is melanoma and can occur in young people. I do think everyone should enjoy the sun but protect themselves appropriately."

Whether it's taking things a bit too far to call enjoying the sun an addiction is hard to say. The sun is a bit difficult to avoid, especially with classic outdoor pastimes such as swimming, fishing, waterskiing or just sitting outside and enjoying the day.

Higgins said the physical results might be a reason the study questions the possibility people could become addicted to tanning.

"Like exercise, tanning may rev up your endorphins, which might be one idea here," she said. "Light also improves our moods, especially in people with seasonal disorders. We need sunlight to process some of our vitamins as well, like Vitamin D, in order to utilize our calcium."

Some medicines that increase sensitivity to UV light

- Antihistamines
- Antiinflammatory drugs (like Ibuprofen)
- Antiseptics
- Antibiotics
- Oral Contraceptives

Source: International Smart Tan Network

Senior Ashley Oppenheim said tanning is something she only does when she has time.

"I worked during the day this summer, so I didn't get much time to lie out," Oppenheim said. "When I'm up at school I do use the [tanning beds] though."

A major reason people tan is for physical attractiveness, said senior Katie Boes. She said she recalls being the tannest she's ever been during her last year of high school, in preparation for a spring break trip to the Bahamas.

"Senior year I would tan or lie out every other day, maybe every other day for hours," Boes said. "I started in November, even though I didn't leave until March. I had a set appointment every day, and would drive from school straight to the tanning beds. I did it not to burn mainly but also probably out of anticipation for the trip."

With the physical and mental benefits of sunlight, it isn't difficult to see how such a theory could emerge, said Higgins.

Sunlight releases endorphins in the skin to create a "feel-good" sensation, which may be an explanation for the sunlight craving, according to Wagner.

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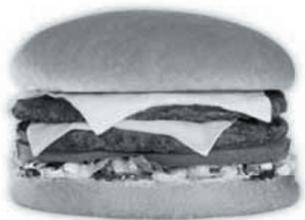
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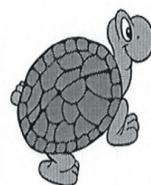


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