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Gender Differences in Indoor Tanning Habits and Location

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2
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4
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65 **To the Editor,**

66 In 2013, 1.9 million US men reported tanning indoors.¹ Existing research largely
67 target teen and young adult female tanners, and less is known about male tanning
68 behavior. Using Survey Sampling International, we recruited a nationally representative
69 sample of 773 adults who intend to use or used an indoor tanning bed. Participants
70 reporting a lifetime history of tanning indoors (n=636; 33.5% male) were included.

71 The survey measured tanning frequency, tanning dependence, tanning location
72 (salon, non-salon business, home), and influences on tanning location selection
73 (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Two or more affirmative responses on the 7-
74 item Behavioral Addiction Indoor Tanning Screener (BAITS) confirmed tanning
75 dependence.² Participants were also surveyed about smoking, weekly soda
76 consumption, and binge drinking (5 or more alcoholic beverages within a couple of
77 hours) in past month.

78 The University of Massachusetts Medical School institutional review board
79 granted ethics approval. Bivariate comparisons were done using χ^2 tests, independent
80 samples t tests, and Wilcoxon rank sum tests, as appropriate using SAS/Stat Version
81 9.3 (SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC).

82 No significant differences were found between men (mean [SD], 6.0 [16.9]) and
83 women (mean [SD], 6.0 [22.7]) in past year indoor tanning visits ($P=.58$; See Table 1).
84 However, men were significantly more likely to meet the BAITS tanning dependence
85 threshold (49.3% vs 29.6%, $P=.001$). Men were more likely to tan in private residences
86 (30.5% vs. 19.4%, $P=.002$). For factors influencing tanning location selection, men gave
87 significantly higher ratings to the ability to get other services at the same time (3.7 vs.

88 3.3, $P=.004$), ability to tan with fewer rules (3.6 vs. 3.2, $P<0.001$), and ability to use a
89 tan as a workout reward (3.6 vs. 3.3, $P=.002$). Women gave significantly higher ratings
90 to cleanliness (4.3 vs. 4.1, $P=.06$) and cost (4.2 vs. 3.9, $P=0.001$).

91 Male tanners were more likely to smoke (59.2% vs 38.8%, $P=.001$), reported
92 more binge drinking in the past month (mean [SD], 4.7 [6.9] vs. 2.2 [4.2], $P<.0001$) and
93 had higher weekly soda consumption (mean [SD], 13.7 [27.0] vs. 8.1 [12.6], $P<.0001$).
94 Male tanners were significantly more ethnically diverse than female tanners ($P=0.002$,
95 See Table 1).

96 Results revealed that while men and women tan at a similar frequency, men
97 were more likely to screen positively for tanning dependence. Men had higher rates of
98 comorbid risk behaviors consistent with prior research identifying associations between
99 tanning dependence and alcohol addiction.³ Men had higher rates of tanning in private
100 residences, where unsupervised tanning duration could facilitate dependence.

101 Tanning salon regulations may have less impact on reducing male tanning. Male
102 tanners preference for settings that offer additional services may provide opportunities
103 for targeted interventions.

104 Male tanners had a greater proportion of minorities than female tanners which is
105 consistent with prior research.⁴ Other studies have shown that sexual minority men have
106 higher tanning rates than heterosexual men.⁵ Studies that have explored largely white
107 samples or did not assess sexual orientation may have painted an incomplete picture of
108 male indoor tanning.

109 Future research is needed to better understand the characteristics and
110 motivations of male indoor tanners.

111

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129

130

Table 1. Participant Characteristics by Gender				
	All (n=636)	Men (n=213)	Women (n=423)	P value
Age, mean (SD)	36.2 (12.9)	36.9 (12.7)	35.9 (12.9)	.34
Ethnicity				.002
% White	76.4%	68.5%	80.4%	
% Hispanic	10.7%	12.7%	9.7%	
% Other	12.9%	18.8%	9.9%	
Education				.01
% High school or GED	13.3%	9.9%	15.1%	
% Some college	23.5%	19.8%	25.4%	
% Associate or Bachelor	46.5%	48.1%	45.7%	
% Graduate	16.7%	22.2%	13.9%	
Health Behaviors				
Smoker	45.6%	59.2%	38.8%	.001
Number of cans of soda consumed per week, mean (SD)	10.0 (18.9)	13.7 (27.0)	8.1 (12.6)	<.0001
Number of days in the past 30 with 5 or more alcoholic beverages consumed, mean (SD)	3.0 (5.4)	4.7 (6.9)	2.2 (4.2)	<.0001
Skin type				.36
%Always/usually burn	33.7%	33.8%	33.6%	
%Sometimes mild burn, tan uniformly	35.7%	38.5%	34.3%	
%Rarely or never burn	30.7%	27.7%	32.2%	

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Table 2. Tanning Behavior by Gender			
	Men (n=213)	Women (n=423)	P value
Frequency of indoor tanning in past year, mean (SD)	6.0 (16.9)	6.0 (22.7)	.58
Tanning Location			.007
Salon Only	91 (42.7%)	217 (51.3%)	
Non-Salon Business	57 (26.8%)	124 (29.3%)	
Home Tanner	65 (30.5%)	82 (19.4%)	
Tanning dependence/behavioral addiction	49.3%	29.6%	<.0001
Factors influencing tanning location choice, mean (SD)			
Ability to tan and get other services at the same time	3.7 (1.06)	3.3 (1.14)	.004
Ability to tan with less rules and regulations	3.6 (1.01)	3.2 (1.14)	<.0001
Ability to reward myself with a tan after I workout	3.6 (1.11)	3.3 (1.14)	.002
Cleanliness	4.1 (.97)	4.3 (.91)	.06
Cost	3.9 (.93)	4.2 (.90)	.001
Convenience	4.1 (.89)	4.2 (.86)	.06
Professionalism	3.9 (.93)	4.0 (.90)	.28

134

135

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138 responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis.

139 Study concept and design: Hillhouse, Pagoto.

140 Acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data: All authors.

141 Drafting of the manuscript: Feng, Nahar, Pagoto

142 Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content: Feng, Hillhouse,
143 Pagoto.

144 Statistical analysis: Frisard,

145 Obtaining funding: Hillhouse, Pagoto.

146 Administrative, technical, or material support: Frisard, Oleski

147 Study supervision: Hillhouse, Pagoto.