

Ultraviolet radiation & skin cancer in the workplace: *a review*

Kimberley Hearne, Jen Makin & Natalie Russell
Cancer Council Victoria

Today's presentation...

- Review the evidence around UV radiation as a workplace hazard, including the scope of the problem in Australia.
- An overview of current strategies to minimise this risk, including policy and education interventions.



Occupational exposure to UV radiation

- Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer
 - Over 1,700 deaths every year
 - Cost to health system, \$300 million
- Outdoor workers have a higher than average risk
 - 200 melanomas and 34,000 non-melanomas
- National Hazard Exposure Worker Surveillance (NHEWS)
 - 34% of Australian workers were exposed to UV.
 - Agriculture, forestry and fishing, and construction industries.
 - Most common protection: sunscreen, hats or protective clothing.
- Queensland construction workers
 - 90% received UVR exposure greater than recommendations.

Who is responsible for protecting workers?

- Occupational Health & Safety Act
 - Both employers and employees have a ‘duty of care’ to reduce the risk of all types of injury and other risks to health
- Skin cancer is firmly established as a compensative disease



Government & Policy

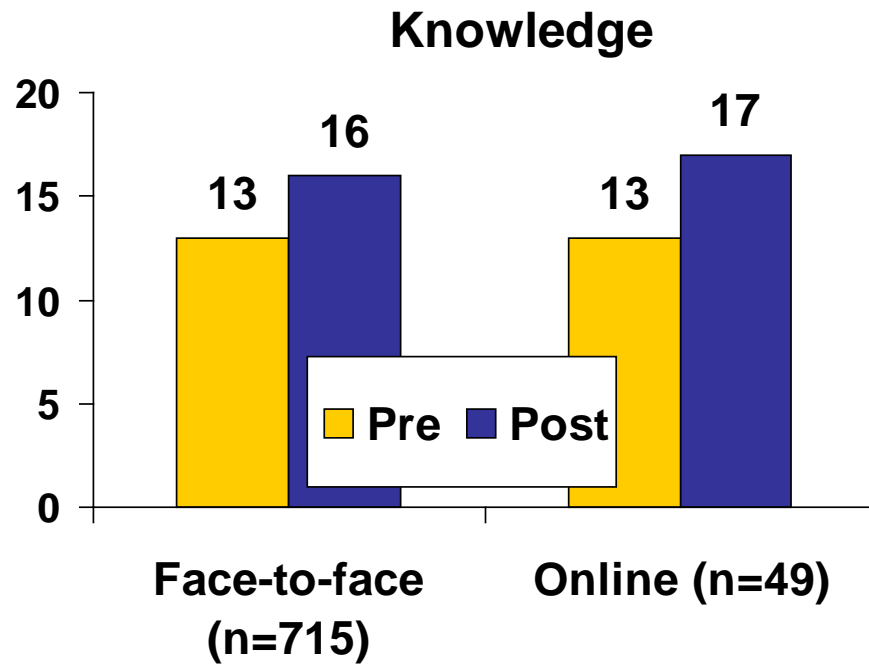
- Sun protective products and clothing became tax deductible in 2003.
- ARPANSA Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation. Revised in 2006.
 - *www.arpansa.gov.au*
- Safe Work Australia Guidance Note for the Protection of Workers from the Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight. Updated in 2008.
 - *www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/*

Cancer Council Victoria's Workplace Program

- Works in partnership with stakeholders e.g. WorkSafe
- Provides information, advice and support
- Develops and disseminates resources
- Provides policy support
- Provides in service session for OHS professionals
- Provides the SunSmart Workplace Education program
 - Victorian on-site SunSmart Workplace Education program
 - National online training program 'Working safely in the sun'



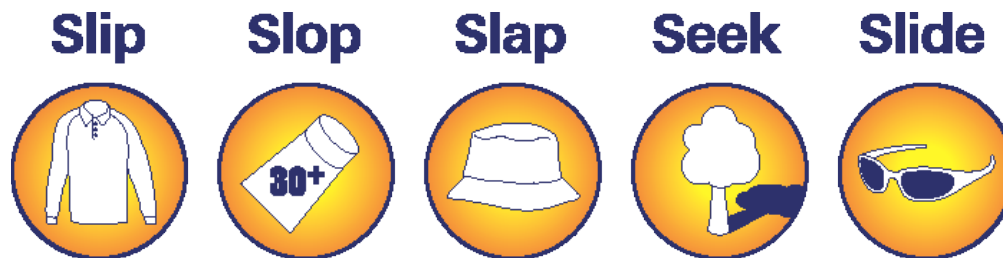
Evaluating the Workplace Education Program



- Both modes of delivery are successful in increasing knowledge about working safely in the sun.
- Overall evaluation:
 - ✓ relevant content
 - ✓ well presented
 - ✓ interesting
 - ✓ promoting behavioural changes
- Next step: does this translate to behaviour change?

Implications and Conclusions

- Overexposure to UV radiation is a hazard
- Outdoor workers at higher than average risk of skin cancer
- Advocacy for policy
- Education programs are effective in increasing knowledge
- Progress has been made! However further attention and action is required.



PROTECT YOURSELF IN FIVE WAYS FROM SKIN CANCER



[sunsmart.com.au](https://www.sunsmart.com.au)

Ph: 13 11 20