A Programme for Photoprotection Education: Implementation and Results

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Abstract

Education for health is an increasingly important objective in education. Photoprotection education may help to avoid negative consequences for health resulting from inadequate sun exposure habits. Photoprotection is especially important for young individuals, like adolescents, as they frequently have poor photoprotection habits. In this respect, educational programmes directed to adolescents may help to develop long-lasting healthy photoprotection behaviours. We developed a sun protection programme in a secondary school of Vila-real (Spain) consisting in a 20 min educational class directed to students of the third year of secondary school before the summer season. After the summer season, a questionnaire was passed out to the students to evaluate their sources of information, knowledge on sun exposure risks, as well as their photoprotection habits. The results of the programme show that the intervention improved the information received by students on this issue. Also, students had a good knowledge of the most important risks of sun exposure as well as about basic measures for photoprotection. However, the intervention group had better level of knowledge than the control group, and girls demonstrated better knowledge than boys. Results of habits showed that a high percentage of adolescents had unhealthy habits, but again the intervention group had significantly better values for photoprotection habits than the control group. However, contrarily to what occurred with the knowledge, boys had better photoprotection habits than girls. In conclusion, educational programmes can improve the photoprotection knowledge and habits of adolescents. Given the important gender differences, we suggest that specific photoprotection programmes should be devised for each sex. Implementation of this kind of programmes in the curriculum of adolescent students could contribute to a better health education in the future.