Dr. Hillhouse Featured in Nature Article on Tanning

Dr. Joel Hillhouse, Professor in the Department of Community and Behavioral Health was extensively quoted in a recent Nature article titled "Prevention: Lessons from a Sunburnt Country."

Dr. Hillhouse runs the Skin Cancer Prevention lab at East Tennessee State University College of Public Health, and has extensively researched the factors that predict indoor tanning behaviors in young women and interventions that can reduce those behaviors. As quoted in Nature, Dr. Hillhouse says "The social perception that tans are beautiful is a barrier that we still as a society haven't overcome." He adds "A young person's view of skin cancer is that it is just so far off."

A recent Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Skin Cancer states "Skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States… Every year in the United States, nearly 5 million people are treated for skin cancer . . . and melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer, causes nearly 9,000 deaths each year."

Dr. Hillhouse’s work on the importance of using messages that focus on the negative appearance outcomes of indoor tanning, is referenced in both the Nature article and in the Surgeon General’s Call to Action, as is his work on the importance of tailoring prevention messages to specific types of tanners. From the Nature article “For young women, Hillhouse advocates stressing the link between ultraviolet exposure and wrinkles and, importantly, suggesting safe alternatives to achieve a socially desirable appearance, such as exercise. Hillhouse explains “Psychology says we need to work with the person in ways that matter to them.”