



## Press Highlights (no 3)

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### **‘There is urgent need to protect Europe’s outdoor workers from UV exposure’**

Vienna, 30/09/16. One of the key advocacy priorities of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology the last few years has been the protection of Europe’s almost 14.5 million outdoor workers from sun exposure. In a report published at the beginning of the year by a group of leading dermatologists, members of the EADV, and other experts from all around Europe, it was clearly shown that this major part of Europe’s workforce is under an increased risk of developing non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC).<sup>1</sup>

Data in the report show that after only five years of outdoor work, the risk of developing NMSC is at least twofold for outdoor workers compared to indoor workers. Furthermore, the data also show that health literacy and proneness to prevention are significantly lower for outdoor workers.

*‘The effects of recreational solar UV radiation inducing skin cancer are largely recognised, and numerous national campaigns have been launched over the past decades as a response to this fact. However, with a workforce of approx. 14.5 million occupied for at least 75 per cent of their work time outdoors, in Europe alone, attention to the invisible risk of UV exposure to develop occupational skin cancer has been vastly neglected,’* postulated Prof. Swen Malte John from Osnabrueck, Germany, during his presentation on the topic at the EADV Press Conference of the 25<sup>th</sup> EADV Congress in Vienna.

The EADV has been extremely vocal on this rather important issue. In addition to the aforementioned report published as a special supplement of the Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology, the EADV launched last April a Global Call to Action urging policy makers, employers, workers’ organisations and physicians to protect Europe’s outdoor workers from skin cancer caused by solar UV-radiation. The Call was launched at a policy debate in the European Parliament, hosted by MEP Nessa Childers (S&D), Vice President of the European Parliamentary Interest Group ‘MEPs Against Cancer’, and co-hosted by MEPs Mr. Ole Christensen (S&D) and Mr. Jens Gieseke (EPP).

*‘Awareness raising campaigns addressing the general population seem to bear results: people’s knowledge on solar UV radiation risks and on their sun protection behaviour has*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jdv.2016.30.issue-S3/issuetoc>

*increased. Why then shouldn't this be possible for occupational skin cancer? Do we have to wait until skin cancer is the highest health care expenditure of all cancers in Europe to draw attention to outdoor workers' number one enemy? We say no,' added Prof. John.*

*'Employers rarely undertake health surveillance, seldomly introduce organisational changes at the worksite and provide poor or no instructions on adequate sun protection. Yet, what seems to make a difference to sun safe behavior is perception of workplace support, including proper safety and health regulations,' he concluded.*

On the European level, there are currently 24 health and safety Directives of the European Commission protecting workers from a number of issues. One of those Directives, which are currently under review, is the artificial optical radiation directive, which lays down limit values for exposures of workers to artificial optical radiation to eyes and skin but completely excludes the continuous exposure of workers to natural UV radiation. EADV has been asking for a revision of this Directive to include solar UV radiation within its scope. This will pave the way to recognising NMSC as an occupational disease for outdoor workers and improve the legislative framework that protects European workers from occupational threats. On the national level, only seven countries have included NMSC into their national list of occupational diseases.

#### About the Speaker:

Prof. Dr. Swen Malte John is Professor and Chairman at the Department of Dermatology, Environmental Medicine, Health Theory at the University of Osnabrueck, Germany.

He is the Director of the "Institute for Interdisciplinary Dermatological Prevention and Rehabilitation (iDerm)" and the "Lower Saxonian Institute for Occupational Dermatology".

He is also the Chair of the EADV's Media and PR Committee and of the ICOH Scientific Committee on "Occupational and Environmental Dermatoses" (SC-OED) as well as the Chair of EU Horizon2020 COST Action "Development and Implementation of European Standards on Prevention of Occupational Skin Diseases StanDerm)". He is also an expert to the WHO and ILO. His research focus is on occupational dermatology and allergology, including the implementation and scientific evaluation of evidence-based interdisciplinary approaches to the prevention of occupational skin diseases with an emphasis on workers' education strategies ("Osnabrueck model").

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**About EADV**

Founded in 1987, EADV is a non-profit association whose vision is to be the premier European Dermato-Venereology Society, with the key aims of improving the quality of patient care, providing continuing medical education (CME) for all Dermato-Venereologists in Europe, and advocacy on behalf of the specialty and patients.

The membership concept has been broadened to include all areas of Europe and elsewhere, and the development of alliances and affiliations with other organisations.

For further information about the Academy, please contact us under +32 2 650 00 90 or visit [www.eadv.org](http://www.eadv.org)