

Robert A. Quiring

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LSU Health Sciences Center, New Orleans, LA

Dr. Deborah Hilton, MD
LSUHSC, Department of Dermatology

“Mineral sunscreens with iron oxides are widely underused in skin of color patients suffering with bothersome dyschromia”

Mineral sunscreens containing iron oxides can have dual function by providing protection from ultraviolet/ visible light and by enhancing cosmesis. These tinted sunscreens help prevent dyschromia and can mask existing discoloration. The aim of our study was to determine current sunscreen use in skin of color patients and their perception of sunscreen's ability to prevent bothersome discoloration. We also investigated factors limiting sunscreen use in this patient population and assessed their ability to adopt these practices into their skin care regimen. The study consisted of a cross-sectional anonymous, confidential survey of 103 patients who were of Fitzpatrick IV-VI skin types. A minority of the participants reported daily sunscreen use (19.23%) or had been spoken to about the importance of sunscreen from a provider (27.8%). A larger percentage of respondents experienced bothersome discoloration (60%), while a smaller portion believed that sunscreen could help with discoloration (23.3%). Approximately 63% of patients reported a willingness to adopt daily sunscreen use if it was better matched to their skin tone. Less than 6% of patients had previously used a tinted sunscreen. With more available iron oxide-containing formulations on the market, dermatologists should counsel patients on these newer agents' roles in both cancer prevention and dyschromia protection. It is advantageous for dermatologists to provide this counseling to patients as well as resources to assist them with identifying the most affordable agents and ones most compatible with their skin tone.