

Guest Editorial



Dr. M. Viswesvariah
London

SUN, IT'S ALLIANCE WITH HEALTH. ARE WE SUN WORSHIPPERS OR SHUNNERS?

Now that summer is at its peak in India and starting in U.K, it is perfect and fitting time to dabble in the surroundings relating to it. Most of western population are sun seekers and sun bathers, have quest for sunny weather, though a good section of clients in sun soaked tropical areas are averse to its intensity. Days in England with high temperature is dubbed as Indian summer. For many in U.K it is a routine and ritual to book holidays in summer focussed towards sunny countries like Spain, one of many aims being to get tanned. We are all well aware of the many advantages of sun exposure, particularly its impact on health. It's therapeutic benefit in skin conditions like Psoriasis, eczema etc are well documented. Regular exposure to sunlight, helps quality sleep, is a mood elevator, helps reduce anxiety and depression. Where there is sun there is hope. Also it is a free nature's provider of Vitamin D to help strengthen bones, albeit we have studied about Rickets in children in the past. Modern living in high rise flats in inner cities denies many of adequate sun exposure. Being a serotonin booster it elevates mood, tops up energy, focuses mind and is extremely helpful in Seasonal Affective disorders. It's effect in clearing Jaundice of infancy is well established. We can only feel gifted when compared to Scandinavian countries where they struggle to get enough sun shine.

Many a times we fail to appreciate the true value of something which we are naturally gifted (freebie) with year round sunny climate and warm weather. Stacked against these positive aspects are some of the adverse effects of sun exposure in certain sections of society. We are reminded ourselves in this situation that skin malignancy is less common in native Asians when compared with Caucasian population. Is there genetic protection or the intrinsic skin architecture that offers this guard, is a point of moot. Unsure also is it due to poverty of knowledge or paucity of these skin malignancies in these zones. The elderly, frail and patients with chronic diseases are particularly vulnerable to heat exhaustion and sun stroke while fair skinned and blonde are vulnerable to sun burns. Excess loss of water leads to dehydration, burning micturition and regular long term exposure causes premature aging of skin, malignancy, Miliaria and the like. Photosensitivity is particularly common in patients on phenothiazines, SLE and Porphyrias requiring photo protection. Hay Fever less well known in tropics decades ago, now being increasingly recognised and sufferers go through miserable time during summer. Ozone layer in the atmosphere stops the transmission of UVC, the most dangerous form of radiation emanating from sun, educating and reminding us about climate protection. So both positivity and negativity is laden with sun and summer weather, keeping exposure to moderation and being Mr. Average makes one pragmatic. So make hay while the sun shines and we will look at the sunnyside of everything. A compliment is a verbal sunshine, friends are the sunshine of life and we will eternally adopt these sayings.