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Compliance with indoor tanning laws for minors among salons and business in the United States

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**Abstract**

**Compliance with indoor tanning laws for minors among salons and business in the United States**

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Indoor tanning is an established risk factor for skin cancer, yet indoor tanning is quite common among adolescents. Laws exist in some states to limit access to indoor tanning by minors, but there is limited research on industry compliance with these laws.

We conducted a telephone survey with a random sample of businesses (n=412) offering indoor tanning in the 14 states with indoor tanning bans for minors as of May 2015. Female research assistants posing as minors conducted telephone interviews with employees using a standardized script.

The majority of businesses (73.5%) told the minor caller that she could not use the tanning facilities. However, 12.6% told her she could tan and 13.9% gave other inaccurate information related to parental permission. Among the businesses (n=368) that completed the full interview, when asked about dangers from indoor tanning 52.2% identified burning and 20.1% mentioned skin cancer. However, 21.7% said dangers were no worse than the sun, 11.4% said the booths in their business were safer than others, and 10.3% said there were no dangers. Many businesses stated benefits when asked, including vitamin D (27.7%), social/cosmetic (27.2%), and treatment of skin diseases (26.4%), with only 4.9% indicating no health benefits.

While three-quarters of businesses followed the indoor tanning bans when a minor called, one-quarter were noncompliant. Many of the businesses made inaccurate health claims about indoor tanning. Additional enforcement may be necessary to increase compliance and other regulations are needed to penalize businesses from stating health benefits and presenting false risk information.