

Sun smart, skin aware

Thirty to forty years ago, sun awareness campaigns to convey skin damage did not exist. As a result, a large percentage of the UK population aged 50+ now have signs of sun damage and are widely susceptible to non-melanoma skin cancers such as actinic keratosis, basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma.

With rates of skin cancer having doubled in the last 15 years, Skcin joined forces with Almirall to launch a new campaign to help people become skin aware, as well as sun smart. The campaign was about reinforcing the 'safe sun' message and encouraging those who may already have damage to be 'skin aware' – by taking note of changes in its appearance, strange lesions and seeking appropriate advice promptly.

Objectives

- Improve non-melanoma skin cancer diagnosis and referral practices in primary care by providing an educational forum for GPs, nurses and pharmacists to engage with local skin cancer specialists
- Educate and inform consumers about the risks from excessive sun exposure during their youth; motivate people to become skin aware as well as sun safe
- Implement a PR and advertising campaign which targets the over 45s to raise awareness of solar keratosis (as caused by excessive sun damage)
- Promote free skin checks in Norwich and Ipswich via print and broadcast activity
- Secure support of a skin cancer charity to act as campaign ambassadors.

Tactics

Skin Awareness Week ran from 22-27 June and was endorsed by national skin cancer charity, Skcin. Trustee and founder Richard Clifford acted as the campaign ambassador and spokesperson. The support of TV's *Embarrassing Bodies* doctors, Dawn Harper and Pixie McKenna was also secured and both undertook clinics alongside skin cancer specialists Stephen Kownacki, Inma Mauri-Sole and Christy Chou. The consulting team were supported by a team of nurses who were available to provide additional information and offer further support.

The campaign spanned May to September and was a coordinated disease awareness and med ed campaign of four parts:

1. During May a series of 'Lesion Recognition Workshops' were held across Norfolk and Suffolk for GPs, nurses and pharmacists. The evening meetings featured presenta-

tions from a local consultant dermatologist, supported by a primary care special interest GP.

2. A press campaign was implemented in early June to raise awareness of the dangers of over-exposure to the sun and the importance of checking the skin for changes. This was supported by the "Do You Have Sun Damaged Skin?" advertising campaign displaying the different types of actinic keratosis and NMSC presentations. Both campaigns directed people to the skin checks being held during Skin Awareness Week in Norwich and Ipswich.
3. Skin Awareness Week launched with a press conference at The Forum where the skin checks were taking place in a specially modified mobile clinic. The clinic remained at The Forum for three days before moving on to The Corn Exchange in Ipswich and was staffed by a team of skin cancer specialists and specialist nurses.
4. Six weeks after the event, the media team released results of the campaign including data about the presentations, the number of referrals and offered interviews with members of the skin check team.

Results

The support of national skin cancer charity Skcin was secured and trustee Richard Clifford acted as the campaign ambassador and spokesperson, featuring in a number of TV and radio interviews and being quoted in various newspaper articles.

The six regional education meetings secured attendance of approximately 35 HCPs per meeting. Delegate feedback rated the sessions as either very good or excellent; post-event research indicates that over 62 per cent of GPs are now more confident about treating actinic keratosis and about when to refer to secondary care.

During the six-day campaign, 692 people visited the skin check clinic: over a third presented with potentially dangerous skin conditions including 15 cases of highly suspected malignant melanoma, 39 suspected non-melanoma skin cancers and 126 cases of Solar Keratosis.

The PR and advertising campaign had resonated with our target audience; 95 per cent



During the six days, 692 people visited the clinic.

of people presenting were over 45 years and 57 per cent of attendees were male, with severe sun damage on their scalps or the tops of their ears.

Coverage secured was approximately £17,000 reaching an audience of almost 16m consumers: *BBC Look East* and *ITV Anglia* both covered the event. The campaign was mentioned more than 70 times across five BBC and independent radio stations in Norfolk and Suffolk. Blanket coverage in advance of the event and during was secured across all the regional print press; including full-page features in the *Eastern Daily Press*, the *East Anglian Daily Times*, the *Evening News* and *Evening Star*. The Norfolk and Suffolk weeklies were also covered in the campaign.

Further coverage was secured in August, reporting on the data captured during Skin Awareness Week with broadcast features and interviews appearing on *BBC Look East*, *BBC Suffolk & Norfolk Radio*, *Heart FM* and in all East Anglian regional press titles.

Evaluation

Market research conducted post campaign indicated a 37 per cent increase in awareness of solar keratosis among our target audience and 58 per cent increase in regular skin checks among the over 40s with over 90 per cent committing to seeking healthcare professional advice within two weeks if they discover a mark of concern. Prescriptions initiated in primary care for treatments for solar keratosis have also shown a steady incline between July to October 2009.



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Client: Almirall (UK) Ltd

Agency: Signature Communications

Campaign: Skin Awareness Week

Timescale: May-August 2009