

SOUTH AFRICA

UV NATIONAL REPORT 2017

General research activities related to UV health:

Dr Caradee Wright is a Specialist Scientist in the Environment and Health Research Unit of the South African Medical Research Council. Her main research interests are in climate and human health. Her research focuses on personal solar ultraviolet radiation exposure, personal dosimetry, health risk assessment and skin cancer prevention. She also works in air quality finding ways to integrate public health into air quality management and broader environmental health policy. Dr Wright is the founder of the Environmental Health Research Network (www.ehrn.co.za) initiated in 2009.

New policies and legislation:

The following devices, which employ UV, are included in the Schedule of Listed Electronic Products, i.e. any sunlamp designed for the tanning of the skin of a human being, any therapeutic lamp, any intra-oral curing device, and any ultraviolet A lamp, including "black lights". As such, a licence is required in terms of the Hazardous Substances Act to import any of these devices into South Africa and to sell it locally. The Directorate Radiation Control (as part of the Department of Health) is charged with the responsibility of administering the Hazardous Substances Act with respect to all listed electronic products. In practice, the emphasis regulatory-wise is on those devices with a medical or quasi-medical application. In order for a licence to be issued to import any such device, the device in question would be required to be in conformity with the relevant provisions of the EU Medical Device Directive 93/42/EEC. Currently, there are no compulsory limits with regard to UV exposure from artificial sources.

The regulatory mandate of the Directorate Radiation Control does not cover human exposure to solar UV.

Areas of public concern and national responses:

There has been quite a bit of activity on the part of state hospitals in acquiring germicidal UVC lamps to somehow counteract the presence of all kinds of bacteria and viruses floating around in hospitals. This has resulted in a small flood of all kinds of UVC lamps being imported, especially from China. Concerns have been raised about the health and safety of medical personnel and patients as a result of their possible exposure to UVC, as well as about the effectiveness of these devices in actually removing or de-activating potentially harmful organisms. Currently, these types of UVC lamps are not covered by the Schedule of Listed Electronic Products and the Directorate Radiation Control therefore has no legal mandate to become involved in the matter.

New/ongoing public information activities:

No public information activities are currently on-going or planned.