



**UV Tanning Beds and melanoma:
biological evidence reinforces the warning
from the French Academy of Medicine¹**

March 17th, 2026

As early as 2003, then in 2009 and 2010 (1), and finally in 2015, in a press release entitled “Tanning beds. They must be banned immediately”, the French Academy of Medicine had alerted the public authorities to the dangers of tanning beds emitting artificial ultraviolet radiations.

Melanoma is not a rare cancer: 17,922 new cases were diagnosed in 2023 in France. It is the most serious form of skin cancer, due to its metastatic potential if it is not diagnosed early. It was responsible for 1,922 deaths in 2022 (2).

Artificial tanning beds mainly emit ultraviolet A (UVA) radiations, which damages the DNA of skin cells and promote mutations. For this reason, artificial ultraviolet radiation is classified as “definitely carcinogenic to humans” by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) (3).

In France, a study has shown that 13.4% of people aged 15 to 75 had used a tanning bed at least once, and that 3.5% had used one in the past year, with more than a third of these for more than ten sessions (4).

A recent study now confirms the link between artificial tanning and melanoma. Researchers have identified, in certain skin tumors, a distinct pattern of DNA mutations characteristic of exposure to artificial UV radiations. They also observed that these alterations can appear in areas of the body that are usually not very much exposed to the sun, suggesting the formation of a reservoir of pre-cancerous cells linked to tanning bed exposure (5).

These findings reinforce the existing epidemiological data confirming the risk of melanoma among users of artificial tanning devices.

¹Press release from the Academy’s Rapid Communication Platform

In light of these recent biological data, the French Academy of Medicine:

1. Once again calls on the health authorities to review the regulations governing the use of 'tanning devices' laid down by Law No. 2016-41 of January 26, 2016, and to aim for a ban on the use of UV tanning devices of melanoma among users of these production facilities strongly advises against, during the introduction of this measure, the use of UV tanning beds by people with a personal or family history of melanoma, or those who have numerous nevi (moles) or an atypical nevus syndrome.
2. Recommends strengthening public information, particularly for young adults, on the risk of melanoma associated with the use of artificial tanning beds, notably during skin cancer screening campaigns.
3. Recommends the implementation of an up-to-date epidemiological monitoring system for users of tanning beds, as the latest available national data dates to 2010.

References

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4. Benmarhnia T., Léon C., Beck F., (2013) Exposure to indoor tanning in France: a population-based study BMC Dermatol, 23:1. 3:6 doi: 10.1186/1471-5945-13-6.
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