

Tanning bed hygiene: Microbes found on tanning beds present a potential health risk

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ABSTRACT

On an average day in the United States, more than 1 million people use tanning salons. However, dermatologists say you may be getting more than just a tan while using salon beds. Studies show that bacteria and viruses can lurk inside tanning beds, including the dreaded herpes virus. Currently, there is little uniformity in sanitary guidelines for tanning salons. Although cleanliness is encouraged, most states have no monitoring or enforcement methods.

STUDY

The top ten rated tanning salons located in New York City, were tested for their microbiologic environment by testing cultures from the tanning beds. Specimens were obtained using one sterile swab pre-moistened with non-bacteriostatic sterile saline solution. Samples were taken from the middle portion of a tanning unit in each salon where skin contact typically occurs.

RESULTS

The study revealed that cultures of all the salons tested grew out pathogens. Of the ten establishments tested, five organisms were isolated from one site, four from one site, three from five sites, two from two sites, and one salon had one isolated organism. The most commonly found pathogens were: *Pseudomonas* spp.,

Bacillus spp., *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Enterococcus* spp., *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Enterobacter cloacae*. All of the pathogens found in this study have been associated with serious skin infections.

CONCLUSION

Only a few states have guidelines for indoor tanning bed sanitation regulations, however, these regulations are rarely enforced. Given the direct contact of the skin of tanning salon patrons with the tanning bed surfaces tested, there is a legitimate concern for pathogen transmission and skin infections. There is need for strict enforceable sanitation regulations for tanning salons in order to prevent the transmission of pathogenic organisms that could cause serious health problems.

REFERENCE

Russak JE, Rigel DS. (2010). Tanning bed hygiene: Microbes found on tanning beds present a potential health risk. *JAAD*. 62(1): 155-157.