Europes Macho Men Snub Sun Protection

Contributed by MINTEL
Saturday, 25 June 2005
Last Updated Saturday, 25 June 2005

With many of us now looking forward to our Summer holidays, research from MINTEL shows Europe's men shunning the safety of sun protection creams. Indeed, slapping on the sun cream is worryingly less popular amongst men than amongst their female counterparts. On average, across France, Germany, Spain and the UK, fewer than two in five (37)% men use sun protection, compared to some 52% of women in these countries.

The difference between men and women is most pronounced in France, where over half (53%) of women use sun protection, compared to just three in ten (31%) men. Amongst men in general, it is, in fact, British men, who prove to be the most conscientious when it comes to sun protection, with some 42% of them using it.

"Men, particularly younger men, are notoriously reluctant to use sun protection products, as they often see it as unnecessary or even â€˜girlyâ€™ to use these products, while others may consider them simply too messy to apply. Certainly, trying to rub cream into a hairy chest can be pretty unpleasant. That said, some manufacturers have now started to take this into account by introducing sprays, which men may find easier to use," comments Hanna Kivimaki, senior consumer goods analyst at MINTEL.

"There is clearly scope to encourage more European men to use these products more readily. In the male toiletries and cosmetics market some growth has been achieved by making brands trendy and associating the products with sports personalities, which could be a way forward for the suncare market. Sportsmen, after all, spend a great deal of time outdoors in the sun," adds Hanna Kivimaki.

Today, around half of the British (48%) and German (45%) nations have used sun cream in the last year, compared to only just over two in five (42%) in France and Spain. The fact that the weather is cooler in Germany and Britain means that their complexion is likely to be less accustomed to sun exposure, which would explain the higher usage of sun protection products in these two cooler countries.

Brits splash out the most on sun cream

MINTEL's research also shows that the British are Europe's biggest spenders, when it comes to plastering on the protection. In 2004, the British spent some 244 million Euros on a variety of lotions to protect themselves from the sun's rays. Although Germans are amongst the most likely to use sun cream, they do in fact spend the least, having shelled out just 145 million Euros on these products in 2004. This is mainly due to the popularity of discounters in Germany, which have brought prices and indeed the market value down.

In the warmer European countries the French spent 224 million Euros, the Italians spent 219 million Euros and the Spanish spent 201 million Euros. With the sun protection market in these five countries now worth over 1 billion Euros, the UK makes up close to a quarter (24%) of the total sun protection market in these European markets.

In terms of growth in sun protection markets there has been increases between 1999 and 2004 in four out of the five countries, with Germany registering the only decrease in market value. Indeed the German sun protection market decreased by 35% over this five year period. The Spanish market for sun protection has seen the greatest rise, increasing by an impressive 53% between 1999 and 2004.

"In general, demand for suncare products continues to grow, driven by an increasing awareness of the potential dangers of over-exposure to UV radiation, an awareness which has been heightened by extensive public information campaigns. A consistently high level of new product development across the board has maintained consumer interest in suncare. In addition to extending the range of sun protection on offer, many new launches have been about adding value, particularly in terms of skincare benefits, such as firming and anti-ageing, which has blurred the line between suncare and skincare. For the foreseeable future, sun protection products are set to continue to grow in France, Italy, Spain and the UK, and even Germany is expected to stabilise," adds Hanna Kivimaki.

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