

Skin cancer on the rise

Around the world, increasing cases of skin cancer have been attributed to the depletion of ozone layer. Ultraviolet B (UV-B) radiation, which belongs to the invisible light spectrum (280-315 nm), is the culprit. It can easily penetrate the atmosphere in areas with low ozone levels.

Measurements in unpolluted areas such as Antarctica, parts of South America and pieces of mid to high Northern hemisphere latitudes point to thinning ozone and a corresponding increase in UV-B. This appreciable decrease in ozone and increase in UV-B has been so widely documented that a general rule of thumb has emerged; a 1 per cent reduction in ozone leads to a 2 per cent increase in UV intensity. Research further indicates that a 2 per cent increase in UV intensity leads to 2-4 per cent increase in skin cancers. In fact, non-melanoma skin cancer is the most common form of cancer today. More research has reiterated that current and future increases in ultraviolet radiation exposure will tend to exacerbate a trend towards higher incidence rates of melanoma. Another disturbing analysis is that increased UV-B exposure also promotes cataract formation and leads to “immunological perturbations”. (Website: www.enn.com)