Testing of Ultraviolet Radiation Sources Used to Reduce COVID-19 Spread

The use of UV radiation is an established method to reduce the contact spread and airborne transmission of bacteria and viruses. As an example, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the use of upper room germicidal UV as a means for tuberculosis infection prevention and control. However, UV can be very hazardous to humans and animals. The WHO and International Commission on Illumination (CIE) warn against the use of UV disinfection lamps to disinfect hands or any other area of skin unless clinically justified[1,2]. In light of the present COVID-19 pandemic spread, many consumer UV products are being put on the market promising efficient disinfection of surfaces and air. METAS in collaboration with the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) is presently testing such products on the market. First measurements indicate that some products are dangerous for the skin even after a short exposure time whereas other products don't achieve any effective disinfection. Based on the results FOPH may publish a warning on the use of consumer UV sources.

References

[1] WHO (2020) https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters, accessed 2020-04-22.

[2]CIE Position statement on the Use of Ultraviolet (UV) Radiation to Manage the Risk of COVID-19 Transmission, http://cie.co.at/publications/cie-position-statement-use-ultraviolet-uv-radiation-manage-risk-covid-19-transmission , accessed 2020-05-19