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Belfast lawyer tackles sunbed dangers

A Belfast lawyer is warning tanning salon customers about the consequences of trying to achieve a golden tan this autumn.

The warning follows a survey by the British Association of Dermatologists, which revealed a high number of tanning salons in Northern Ireland have 'shockingly poor standards of practice and a severe lack of staff training'.

Fergus McConnell, member of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) in Northern Ireland, and a partner at McConnell Kelly & Co in Belfast, has seen first-hand the damage sun beds can do. His client was badly burned on her second visit to a tanning salon.

"My client was advised to have a ten-minute sun bed session with a cream for 'dark' skin. Her skin tone is not fair but certainly isn't dark and this was not taken into consideration," Fergus explained. "She suffered very painful burns. The repercussions of this advice lasted several months, she needed medication and is now forced to pursue legal action."

Denise Kitchener, chief executive of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers said: "Most people are aware that tanning is a health hazard, but choose to do it anyway. We just want those people who do visit tanning salons to fully understand the risks, think carefully about how long they go in for and whether their skin tone can handle tanning at all.

"It appears that until the industry is regulated more thoroughly in Northern Ireland, people will have to regulate themselves to avoid injury."

Notes to editors:

- To see the full results of the survey by the British Association of Dermatologists, visit <http://www.bad.org.uk/site/1241/default.aspx>
- For further contact: Lisa Wardle, Press & PR Officer, t:0115 9388715, or Jane Hartwell, Assistant Press & PR Officer, t:0115 9388702