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## UV Light to Treat COVID-19; UNH UV Expert Offers Comment

Friday, April 24, 2020

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DURHAM, N.H.— Jim Malley, an internationally known expert in ultraviolet light and professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of New Hampshire, is available to talk about why UV light to treat COVID-19 is not safe for patients or pets.

“UV light, more specifically germicidal UV or far UVC, can be very effective at inactivating viruses, bacteria and other human pathogens and if properly designed and operated can be a successful application for disinfecting PPEs, surgical instruments, air and water,” says Malley. “However, we’re talking about light waves at low wavelengths that contain a lot of energy and that energy has been shown in many studies to be extremely damaging to human tissues in particular the skin and the eyes.”

**Malley can be reached at Jim.Malley@UNH.edu (mailto:Jim.Malley@UNH.edu) or (603) 759-1541.**

Even though some recent reports have explored that using far UVC, in a wavelength range of 220 to 225, may be less damaging to human tissues, Malley says these are still preliminary lab studies, primarily on mice, and need to be further studied to better determine human health impacts and provide a more complete understanding of how and where this far UVC energy is absorbed by the body. Until then, Malley agrees with panels of health and UV experts that UV energy is not recommended as a treatment for COVID-19.

“In general, physical or chemical methods that are made to disinfect or kill organisms whose molecular building blocks are not that much different than ours should be treated by the public the same way they treat poisons,” says Malley.

Malley has over 30 years of experience using chemical and physical options, in particular UV, to disinfect water, air and surfaces from bacteria, viruses and protozoan cysts. His expertise has helped guide front line medical practitioners and first responders from Boston to Denver and beyond looking for facts on the most effective way to use UV light to disinfect N95 masks and medical equipment. UV is being used in hospitals and hanging in ambulances so EMTs can sanitize their surfaces and implements on the go. Malley estimates about a third of the calls he receives are from healthcare professionals in rural areas that don’t have the same resources as those in cities.



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