



Australian Society of Cosmetic Chemists

ASCC POSITION STATEMENT

on

"HEAVY METALS IN COSMETICS"

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August 2019

Position

The issue of heavy metals in cosmetics has been a concern for a considerable period. Various reviews, particularly by the American FDA have indicated that cosmetics in general are not a problem. There may be traces of heavy metals where natural fillers/pigments are used in products such as eye liner, mascara/blusher and lipsticks. Instances of unacceptable heavy metal levels have been found in such products from some less developed countries.

The Australian Society of Cosmetic Chemists position is that there does not appear to be an issue with products from EU, USA and there is no identifiable problem with cosmetics from countries which operate to similar standards (e.g. Canada, Japan, and Australia).

Overview

This topic made news when Cosmetic Design Europe newsletter published the following article on 25 July 2017.

[Germany reduces heavy metal limits in cosmetics](#)

By [Lucy Whitehouse](#) +, 25-Jul-2017

The German government has announced a reduction in the limits for 'technically avoidable' heavy metals in cosmetics and personal care products.

<http://www.cosmeticsdesign-europe.com/Regulation-Safety/Germany-reduces-heavy-metal-limits-in-cosmetics>

The article makes reference to a study conducted by 'scientists at the Dominican University of California' - <http://www.dominican.edu/dominicannews/research-finds-cadmium-link-to-breast-cancer> .

When contacted, the Dominican University of California advised that it has not done any work on cosmetics as such. Their work was related to the effects of heavy metals, including cadmium, and that 'breast cancer cells become increasingly aggressive the longer they are exposed to small concentrations of cadmium'.

It appears that the higher risk sources of traces of heavy metals (including cadmium) are most commonly eye liner, mascara/blusher and lipstick. The trace levels arise from the use of natural fillers/pigments etc. used in such products.

In March 2017 the Cosmetic Commission of the German Federal Health Office (BGA) published values for technically avoidable levels (BGA 1985, 1990). These earlier orientation values were considered outdated by the preliminary Commission for Cosmetics in 2005, since it was expected that the levels of heavy metals have declined in cosmetic products; therefore, lower technically unavoidable levels are achievable by applying good manufacturing practice.' (Reference 1)

The new EU Cosmetic Regulation 1223/2009 (Reference 2) addresses heavy metals also. There are published reports on cosmetic products, typically eye liner, mascara/blusher and lipstick, from less developed countries which have been found to contain unacceptable levels of heavy metals - Pakistan (Reference 3), Nigeria (Reference 4).

There is a comprehensive article, last updated in February, 2018, from the FDA on various heavy metals in cosmetics - (Reference 5) - article entitled 'FDA's Testing of Cosmetics for Arsenic, Cadmium, Chromium, Cobalt, Lead, Mercury, and Nickel Content'

This study indicates that there is not a problem with cosmetics *per se*.

California Proposition 65 - 'The US state of California is reviewing legislation covering cosmetics (along with many other products and materials); the proposed legislation is complex and interested parties should ensure that they have expert advice, prior to sale/marketing of cosmetic materials/products into the USA.

<https://chemicalsolutionsltd.com/blog/2017/09/prop-65-important-changes-coming-august-2018/>

It should be noted that sites such as www.safecosmetics.org need to be carefully reviewed -there is an appearance of science but there is a considerable mix of fact and opinion.

References:

- (1) Technically avoidable heavy metal contents in cosmetic products
... <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs00003-016-1044-2>
- (2) The New EC Cosmetics Regulation 1223/2009 - IKW
www.ikw.org/fileadmin/content/downloads/.../SP_Kosmetikrichtlinien_01.pdf

Jul 11, 2016 - The new EC **Cosmetics** Regulation will completely rewrite
..... across the world for **heavy metal** levels.
- (3) Comparative study of heavy metals content in cosmetic products www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1878535213003195
- (4) Determination of some heavy metals in selected cosmetic products

...
www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214750016300919
- (5) 'FDA's Testing of Cosmetics for Arsenic, Cadmium, Chromium, Cobalt, Lead, Mercury, and Nickel Content' at the following link:
<https://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/ProductsIngredients/PotentialContaminants/ucm452836.htm>
- (6) California Proposition 65 at the following links:
<https://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/ProductsIngredients/PotentialContaminants/ucm452836.htm>.
<https://chemicalsolutionsltd.com/blog/2017/09/prop-65-important-changes-coming-august-2018/>