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Hair cosmetics: A lacuna in dermatology

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Introduction: Beautiful tresses are not only every woman's dream anymore. The endorsement of haircare products by top male stars proves that men equally spend a fortune on haircare. This sudden emphasis on hair and haircare has revolutionised the hair grooming industry, where the focus has veered from cleaning to repair. The introduction of procedures and specialised products to make the hair look naturally lustrous and manageable or to alter the colour and structure of the hair shafts incorporates contentment at the receiving end.

A "HEALTHY" head of hair is described as hair that has lustre, is smooth, silky, bouncy, with good volume and with no evidence of balding and parasites. "WEATHERING" of hair is described as damage to the cuticle resulting in structural changes to the hair shaft over a period of time i.e. alteration of normal pH (4.5 to 5.5). A major contributing factor to weathered hair is the repeated use of chemical procedures, hot combs, blow drying, rough combing, improper use of hair products. Thus, understanding hair care products, their efficacy and mode of action makes it easier for dermatologists to understand the severity of hair damage and/or recommend the use of proper hair care products.

Discussion: Evaluation of Hair care products can broadly be classified into 2 categories:-

1. Products that work on the exocuticle, which include:
 - shampoos for cleansing
 - conditioners for hair shaft protection
 - serums for improvement of shine, slip and easy compatibility
 - hairsprays/aerosols used to keep the hair stiff
 - waxes are oil based hair styling products
 - gels are alcohol based hair styling products
 - mousses are foam based hair styling products for volume and shine
2. Products that work on the cortex or alter the structural integrity of the hair shaft, which include:
 - hair colours (gradual hair dyes, temporary hair dyes, semi permanent hair dyes and permanent hair dyes) used to alter the natural hair colour.
 - hair bleaching agents used to lighten hair colour through oxidation.
 - hair perming or straightening agents used to alter the natural structure of the hair shaft

Conclusion: Knowledge on the use and contents of hair care products broadens the area of patient counselling, because when Abstinence cannot be incorporated, Education is the better option

Biography

Dr. Sanjita has graduated from National Pirogov Memorial Medical University, Ukraine and has pursued her post graduation in Dr. Balabhai Nanavati Hospital and Research centre, Mumbai, India. She has contributed immensely to the field of Dermatology and Cosmetology. Serving ELSEVIER India, a premier publishing organization, she has published papers in reputed journals and has presented her research topics globally in various conferences. She is also associated to the editorial board of a journal of repute and is a part of the scientific advisory board for a leading pharmaceutical company in INDIA

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