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Safety of skin lightening products in European countries

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Skin lightening products are widely used by people with hyperpigmentary skin disorders. The most effective molecules used in these products were hydroquinone, mercury and corticosteroids. These chemical compounds are banned to be used in cosmetic products because they can be harmful to human health. We investigated the Rapid Alert System (RAPEX) database from January 2005 until December 2014 to give information about the safety of skin lightening products in European markets. 124 cosmetic products contained hydroquinone in concentration from 0.06 to 7.1%. Hydroquinone was found in skin lightening products (90.32%) body lotions, (8.06%) body oils (0.81%) and hair creams (0.81%). The country of origin of the products was Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, United States, France, United Kingdom, Poland, Germany, Belgium and Jamaica. A large number of cosmetics were contaminated by heavy metals: Lead, mercury, antimony, chromium, cadmium, arsenic and nickel. In 45 cosmetic products mercury was present in skin lightening products in concentration from 9.1 mg/kg to 42000 mg/kg. Lead was found lipsticks, make-up, children products in concentration up to 16900 mg/kg. Skin lightening products with clobetasol propionate were also recalled during the period. As a conclusion we can say that people with hyperpigmentary skin disorders are exposed by the risk of chronic use of prohibited chemical compound in skin lightening products.

Biography

Edlira Neza has completed his PhD from University of Siena, Italy in Pharmaceutical Sciences (with e section in cosmetic science) and her undergraduate studies at the University of Tirana. Her research interest is in the area of cosmetic science. She has published several papers in European journals. She is currently a Lecturer in the Department of Pharmacy Aldent University, Albania and also has an interesting experience in pharmaceutical industry.

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