Product Options in Women-Engaged Research (P. O. W. E. R.) Study

A research study to learn about the personal care products purchased and used by Black women in Massachusetts

THE COLLABORATIVE
Silent Spring Institute
Resilient Sisterhood Project
Black women in Massachusetts
HEALTH INEQUITIES
Black women have higher rates of hormone-mediated problems compared to other groups of women, including diabetes, pre-term birth, infertility, earlier puberty, uterine fibroids, and more aggressive forms of breast and endometrial cancers.

EDC EXPOSURE
Exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs), chemicals the interfere with the body's hormones and have important impacts on health, have been linked to many hormone-mediated diseases. Although nearly every American is exposed to EDCs, some are more exposed than others. Black women have higher body burdens of parabens and phthalates likely due to differences in personal care product use.
WHAT WE DID

1. Recruited 25 women to join the conversation
   - Held five virtual workshops
   - Discussed product use and considerations when selecting personal care products

2. Participants logged their product use over three days using a smartphone app
   - App users entered information about their products and frequency of use
   - We inventoried products logged

3. Held two follow-up workshops
   - Shared summaries of the discussions and app-inventoried products
   - Discussed recommendations to limit exposures to harmful chemicals in consumer products
Findings

1. Important Characteristics When Choosing Products
   - Natural
   - Fragrance
   - Effectiveness
   - Representation / Black-owned

2. Sources for Product Recommendations
   - Social media
   - Friends and family
   - Professionals (dermatologist/hair stylist)

3. Most Frequently Logged Products
   - Toothpaste
   - Facial soap, cleanser, or wipes
   - Deodorant and/or antiperspirants
   - Lotions and creams

4. Popular Product Retailers
   - Sephora
   - Target
   - CVS
   - Walmart
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Choose paraben-, phthalate-, and fragrance-free products. Download Silent Spring's free Detox Me app for more tips.
- Support beauty brands that evaluate their products for chemicals of health concern.
- Talk with beauty professionals about using products without endocrine disrupting chemicals.
- Support policies that address discrimination based on personal appearance and that increase ingredient transparency.
The P. O. W. E. R. Team

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turi.org

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rsphhealth.org