

Interest group claims test proves safety of phthalates

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10/11/2007 - **In response to continued speculation from pressure groups over the safety of phthalates in cosmetics, the American Chemistry Council's Phthalate Esters Panel has unveiled study results claiming to show that specific phthalates have no effect on key hormones.**

The study, which was carried out by Danish researchers at Bipebjerg Hospital on 26 young, healthy male volunteers to determine whether or not topical ointments containing specific phthalates had any effect on hormone levels.

The volunteers had their whole bodies covered in a topical cream containing both diethyl phthalate (DEP) - a substance used to prolong fragrances in a range of personal care products, and dibutyl phthalate (DBP) - a substance used in a range of personal care products, but most commonly in nail varnishes.

The results of the study, which was carried out every day over a period of one week and published in the periodical Environment Science and Technology, showed that although the chemicals were absorbed into the bloodstream, the blood tests did not show any adverse effects on hormone levels.

"The systematic absorption of these compounds did not seem to have any short-term influence on the levels of reproductive and thyroid hormones in the examined men," the report findings stated.

The study is being used by the group to underline what it terms as recurring scientific findings that prove the safety of phthalates used in cosmetic products.

The results provide further scientific evidence to dispel public speculation by pressure groups linking this family of chemicals to reproductive damage in human males, the group claims.

"Once again we see that it doesn't serve the public interest to speculate - we need to follow the science leads," said Marian Stanley, manager of the American Chemistry Council's Phthalate Esters Panel.

Lobby groups that have campaigned against the use of specific phthalates in personal care products have been led by the Environmental Working Group (EWG), which has supported its campaign with alternative scientific results.

The studies used by the group have concentrated on both the environmental impact of phthalate chemicals once they seep into drainage and sewerage systems, a point that was underlined by a recent study showing potentially hazardous levels of phthalate contamination in waste water from San Francisco Bay.