

Consumers Can Use Skin Care Products with Confidence: Latest study of no relevance to human use of moisturisers

The Australian cosmetic products industry places the highest regard on the safety and environmental performance of its products.

Our industry's products are regulated for public health and safety by the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS) and the Federal Health Department.

These government agencies independently assess the safety of ingredients in cosmetics and other personal care products, like moisturising creams, and have a watching brief to assess any new studies or reports. This includes a recent article in the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* that has raised unnecessary alarm regarding the use of moisturisers.

As stated in recent media reports, this study has been subject to strong criticism by leading skin care experts. These comments include:

“Australian experts said the research published in the Journal of Investigative Dermatology yesterday, was premature, unhelpful and even irresponsible”, ‘Cancer risk in lotions’, pg 25, Sydney Daily Telegraph, 15 August 2008

“But Australian disease experts say the study, which relied on tests performed only on hairless rats, are inconclusive and unnecessarily alarmist, with no proof they apply to humans....Australian experts say the research, published in the Journal of Investigative Dermatology, is premature, unhelpful and even irresponsible. Graham Mann, a professor of medicine at the University of Sydney, said tests were "highly artificial", making the results "very hard to relate to humans and sun-induced skin cancer". Professor Rod Sinclair, director of the department of dermatology at St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne, said the significance in humans was "doubtful". ‘Moisturisers linked to skin cancer’, Melbourne Age, 15 August 2008

This study lacks relevance to consumer use of moisturisers and has very limited public health significance based on:

- Testing only in hairless laboratory mice, which are specifically bred for laboratory use because they are particularly susceptible to skin disorders including skin cancers. This is acknowledged via reference in the journal article to “*high-risk mice*” and the additional comment by the researchers that: “...*it should be noted that mouse skin is much thinner and more permeable than human skin.*”
- The pre-treatment of these susceptible mice with doses of UV radiation prior to any application of moisturiser. In a media quote the Medical Director of Cancer Partners UK, Karol Sikora states: “*This is a pretty artificial situation with the mouse skin primed by a lot of UV light to develop cancer.*”

Consumers can continue to use moisturisers with confidence and in the knowledge that these products play an essential role in keeping skin healthy.

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15 August 2008