

# Trends in Awareness and use of Cosmetics among Medical Students – A Study from a Medical College in South Kerala, India

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Since there is an increase in the newer products and availability of cosmetics along with an increase in its usage and associated side-effects; this study is conducted with a view of finding any difference in trends in cosmetic use and its awareness a decades time among medical students.

**Material and Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among two batches of medical students. One survey conducted during 2006 and another survey conducted on another batch in 2016 among students before they started their Dermatology training. An appropriate questionnaire was used to collect the data.

**Results:** 206 students participated in the 2006 study and 149 students in the 2016 study. In 2006, 83.75% boys and 98.3% girls used cosmetics; it was 82.76% and 97.8% respectively. 35% students in 2006 and 76% in 2016 opined that cosmetics enhanced their general appearance. In 2006, 56.5% and in 2016, 55.7% believed that cosmetics increased their self-confidence. 67.5% (2006) and 80% (2016) preferred natural cosmetics. For beauty advice, in 2006, 22% (beauticians) 22% (magazines), 23% (dermatologists), 28.5% (friends): in 2016, 6.7% (beauticians) 12% (magazines) 33.56% (dermatologists) 33.56% (friends). Influences in selecting cosmetics, in 2006 by cine actors-9%, models-8.5%, friends-41% none-41.5%; in 2016 cine actors-5.37%, models-6.7%, friends-29.53%, none-57%

**Conclusion:** Natural cosmetics are gaining preference over the years and also the occurrence of adverse reactions because of other cosmetics showed an increasing trend towards natural ones.

**Keywords:** Cosmetics, Medical Students

## INTRODUCTION

Cosmetics (make-up) are substances or products used to enhance or alter the appearance or fragrance of the body. Most of the cosmetics are designed for use on face and hair. Common cosmetics include lipstick, mascara, eye shadow, foundation, rouge, skin cleansers and skin lotions, shampoo, hairstyling products (gel, hair spray, etc.), perfume and cologne. The U.S., Food and Drug Administration (FDA), defines cosmetics as "intended to be applied to the human body for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance without affecting the body's structure or functions".<sup>1</sup>

This study was conducted to investigate the consumption behavior and attitudes towards cosmetics among two batches of medical students. This research was done to assess the attitude and incidence of cosmetic use among two batches of medical students. The secondary research aim was to find any difference in trends in cosmetic use and its awareness in a decade's time. Finally to identify the key determinants in cosmetic usage among young adults.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

A cross-sectional study was conducted among two batches

of medical students after due ethical clearance and informed consent. One survey conducted during the year 2006 and another survey conducted on another batch in 2016 among students before they started their Dermatology training. The survey was done with the aid of the same questionnaire. All the students of the medical college were enrolled in the study.

The study was conducted with the questionnaire given in Table-1.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Microsoft office 2007 was used for the statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics like mean and percentages were used for the analysis.

## RESULTS

206 students participated in the 2006 study of which 83.75% were boys and 98.3% girls used cosmetics; it was 82.76% boys and 97.8% girls out of 149 students in the 2016 study (figure – 1).

Out of the 206 students of 2006 study 70 (35%) believed that cosmetics enhanced their general appearance while 20 (10%) did not agree (figure-2). 113 (76%) in 2016 opined that cosmetics enhanced their general appearance. i.e., more than double the students started to believe that cosmetics are needed to enhance their appearance in a ten year gap. Surprisingly, 56.5% in 2006 and only 55.7% in 2016, believed that cosmetics increased their self-confidence. Chart - 2

137 (67.5% in 2006) preferred natural products, while 119 (80% in 2016) preferred natural cosmetics; which again can be considered a paradoxical change. In 2006 study, 51 (25.5%) were influenced in their choice of cosmetic products by beauticians, 44 (22%) magazines, 46 (23%) dermatologists and 57 (28.5%) by friends, but in 2016, 10 (6.7%) were influenced by beauticians; 18 (12%) by magazines; 50 (33.56%) dermatologists and 50 (33.56%) by friends.

Surprisingly most of the students 41.5% (83) in 2006 were not influenced by cine actors or models in selecting their cosmetics, which further dropped down to 88% (131) in 2016. In 2006; 82 (41%) took their friends' advice in this regard, which in 2016 dropped to 44 (29.53%) and also the students became very

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	Age	Sex	Place
1	Do you think the use of cosmetics can change the general appearance of a person ?		
	a) Definitely	b) May be	c) Not at all
	d) Don't know		
2	What do you prefer?		
	a) Natural	b) Synthetic	c) Synthetic-branded
3	Whom do you prefer for beauty advice?		
	a) Beautician	b) Magazines	c) Dermatologist
	d) Friends		
4	Who among the following influences you the most in selecting cosmetics?		
	a) Cine actors	b) Models	c) friends
	d) none		
5	Do you think that the use of cosmetics increase your self-confidence?		
	a) Yes	b) No	
6	Have you ever developed allergy to any cosmetic product?		
	a) Yes	b) No	
7	If yes it is,		
	a) Rash	b) Itching	c) Pigmentation
	d) others		
8	How much money do you spend a month for cosmetics?		
	a) Below Rs. 100	b) Rs.100-250	c) Rs. 250-500
	d) Above Rs.500		
9	How often do you visit beauty parlor?		
	a) Weekly	b) Twice a month	c) Once a month
	d) Not at all		
10	Which among the following do you use regularly?		
	a) Eyeliner	b) powder	c) foundation
	d) lip stick	e) sunscreen	f) shampoo
	g) hair conditioner	h) hair gel	i) hair dyes
	j) nail polish	k) depilators	l) perfumes
	m) deodorants		

Table-1: Questionnaire

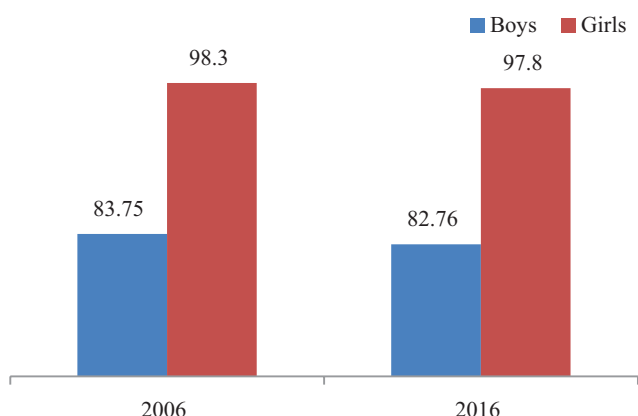


Figure-1: Percentages of participants using cosmetic

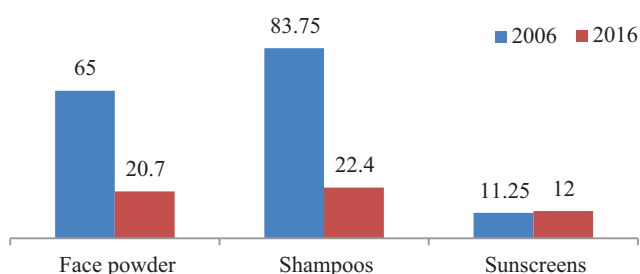


Figure-3: Boys

independent in a decades time as in 57% no one had an influence on them in choosing the cosmetics. A very significant finding was that only 39 students (6%) had history of allergy to cosmetic products in the form of rash, itching, pigmentation, etc. 161 (94%) never developed allergy to these cosmetic products, but in 2016; 24 (16%) had developed allergy to cosmetic products.

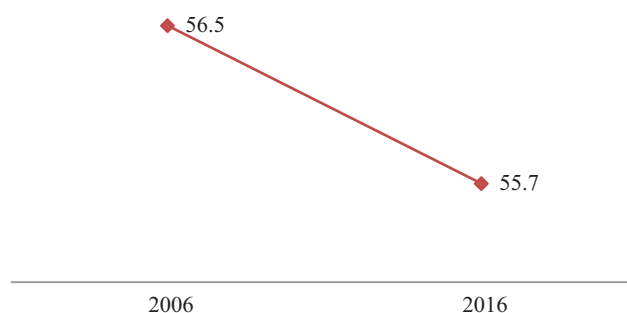


Figure-2: Cosmetics increased Self confidence

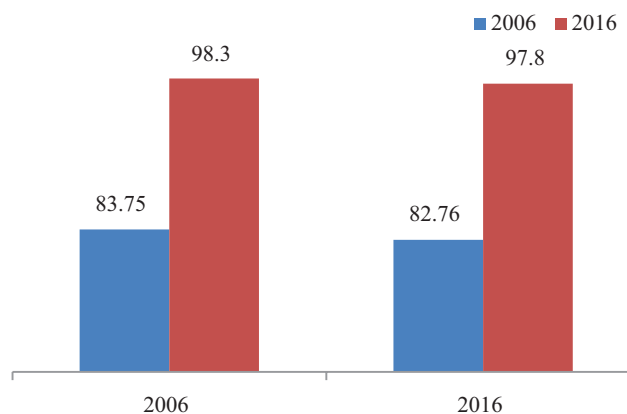


Figure-4: Girls

84% spend less than Rs.100/- a month on cosmetics and 3% spend above Rs.500/- which was 65% and 3.35% respectively in 2016 (the rest in between). Surprisingly 69% in 2006 and 72.5% in 2016 have never visited beauty parlor. Among the medical students who visit beauty parlor majority were girls. These findings may be because this medical college is situated in a rural area and all the students

are residential.

65% of the boys used face powder, 83.75% used shampoos and 11.25% used sunscreens in the 2006 study, which became 20.7%, 22.4% and 12% respectively by 2016. In 2006 study, 98.3% of the girls use eye-liner, 85% used face powder and 25% used sunscreens which was 40.6%, 66% and 13.2% in 2016; thereby showing a decreasing trend in the use of these. The use of perfumes and deodorants showed an increasing trend down the decade (figure – 3,4).

## DISCUSSION

In this study around 98% females of both the years used cosmetics, which is in accordance to many studies of which the latest that could be cited was by Dibaba et al.<sup>1-3</sup> Other studies also confirm our finding that people regardless of their age reported of being more confident with application of cosmetics.<sup>4-7</sup> Graham and Klingman in their book on Psychology of Cosmetic Treatments, while explaining the emotional and social benefits of using cosmetics added that women appeared more positive after the utilization of cosmetics.<sup>8</sup> A study conducted in 359 women showed that psychological mood significantly improved with hair care procedures.<sup>9</sup>

In contrary to the recent studies which showed an increase in the use of cosmetics by both males and females; our study rather showed a decreasing trend in cosmetic use.<sup>10</sup>

In 2016 study (76%) double the percentage of students as compared to 2006 study (34%) believed that cosmetics enhanced their appearance; but a 2013 study showed that this was 37%.<sup>8</sup> As seen in our study, in most of the other studies also people preferred natural or traditional cosmetics like honey, kesil, etc for face and egg, avocado fruit and butter for hair.<sup>1</sup> In a study by Tejal et al; 44% of the total population preferred ayurvedic products as cosmetics.<sup>8</sup>

Our study showed an increased usage of face powder and eyeliner, whereas body lotion, deodorants and hair cosmetics were the common cosmetics used in a study done in a college in Ethiopia.<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with our study, the Surat study also showed that most of the study subjects spend less than Rs.500/- on cosmetic products.<sup>8</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This study done in two batches of students ten years apart majority of the students used some form of cosmetics. The preference for natural cosmetics increased over the years and also the occurrence of adverse reactions showed an increasing trend. The amount spent per month on cosmetics is also very less. There are very less number of studies especially Indian studies addressing this; so large studies are needed to study these aspects in the Indian scenario.

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