



CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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CASE finds excessive mercury content in one skincare product

A test commissioned by the Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) on skincare products found excessive mercury content of **3,604 µg/g** in one product - Royal Expert Whitening Cream 50ml. The use of mercury as an ingredient in cosmetic products is prohibited under the ASEAN Cosmetic Directive, the prevailing regulation for cosmetics in Singapore administered by the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) in Singapore.

Consumers who have purchased or are using this skincare product are advised to stop using it and to discard it immediately.

Background

Skincare products are covered under the ASEAN Cosmetic Directive and are regulated in Singapore by HSA.

Hydroquinone, tretinoin and mercury are common adulterants found in skincare products. Such substances are usually added to enhance the beauty-related claims of these products. Long-term use of products containing such adulterants can lead to severe health issues such as permanent pigmentation, skin cancer, liver damage and mercury poisoning. These three adulterants are prohibited in skincare products sold in Singapore.

Recent post-market surveillance of skincare products by HSA has resulted in the discovery of these adulterants across a range of brands. Given this trend and the increasing popularity of skincare products, CASE commissioned a test to assess the presence of adulterants in skincare products available in the market.

Scope and methodology

The 20 samples for this test were selected by random sampling. The samples were purchased from departmental stores, direct sales distribution channels and online shopping platforms, and from different countries of origins.

The samples were tested by an accredited laboratory using ASEAN harmonised methodologies. Hydroquinone and tretinoin were tested using High Performance Liquid Chromatography-Diode Array Detection techniques. Mercury was tested using Hydride Generation/Cold Vapour Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy technique.

Outcome of the test

According to the test results, hydroquinone and tretinoin were not detected in all 20 samples. Mercury was detected in four samples (see Annex A).

While the use of mercury as an ingredient in cosmetic products is prohibited, trace levels of mercury of less than 1µg/g is allowed as mercury is an environment contaminant and it may not be possible for a manufacturer to remove all traces of mercury in a finished product.

The level of mercury detected in three samples, Premier by Dead Sea Premier Prestige White New Enforced Formula Pearl Whitening Cream Complex 60ml (S16), Secret Key Snow White Milky Lotion 120g (S18), and SK-II Spots Care & Brighten Day Cream 25g (S19), were within this trace level.

However, the level of mercury detected in Royal Expert Whitening Cream 50ml (S17) was **3,604 µg/g** which was much higher than the permissible level (less than 1µg/g) and is a cause for concern. This product was purchased via an online shopping platform. Photographs of this product can be found in Annex B.

HSA has been alerted to the matter. They have conducted tests on the same product sold on several online shopping platforms. All the products tested similarly contained high levels of mercury. HSA will be stopping sales of the product from the online shopping platforms.

Recommendations

Consumers who have purchased Royal Expert Whitening Cream 50ml are advised to stop using the product and to see a doctor if they are experiencing adverse effects following its use.

Consumers are encouraged to read the ingredient list of skincare products before purchasing or using them. They should also use these products within the recommended usage and follow the instructions on the label. When using any skincare product for the first time, consumers should check for allergic reactions by applying the product on a small area on their skin.

Consumers are reminded to exercise special caution when purchasing skincare products online. In particular, they should exercise discretion and only purchase such products from reliable and reputable sources.

Lim Biow Chuan
President
Consumers Association of Singapore

Annex A – List of 20 Skincare Products Tested and the Results

S/No	Name	Manufacturer/Distributor	Hydroquinone (µg/g)	Tretinoin (µg/g)	Mercury (µg/g)
S01	3ce White Milk Cream 50ml	Made in Korea	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S02	Barielle Advanced Formula Porcelain Skin Brightening Cream 70.8g	Barielle Sales Corp. Great Neck, NY 11021	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S03	BeautyLine Brightening 4ever 50ml	PM-International AG 15, Waistrooss L-5445 Schengen PM-International Headquarters Asia Pacific Pte Ltd 12 Kallang Avenue #01-54 & 55 Aperia Singapore 339511	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S04	Bio-essence Tanaka White Double Whitening Day Cream SPF20 50g	Licensed & Supervised by Bio-essence Laboratory Singapore Produced in China Made for L.D. Waxson (S) Pte Ltd No. 29 Defu Lane 9 Singapore 539269	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S05	Chando Cellcrystal Whitening Intensive Night Cream 50g	www.chcedo.com	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S06	Clarins Paris White Plus Pure Translucency Brightening Revive Gel 50ml	Made in France Imported by Clarins Pte Ltd 302 Orchard Road #05-01 Tong Building Singapore 238862	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S07	Clinique Even Better Brightening Moisture Gel Cream 50ml	Clinique Laboratories, Dist. New York, N.Y. 20022 New York Estee Lauder Cosmetics Pte Ltd 83 Clemenceau Avenue #02-08 Singapore 239920	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S08	Cloud 9 Blanc De Whitening 50ml	Made in Korea www.claireskorea.com	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected

		www.9complex.co.kr			
S09	Forever Epiblanc 28.3g	Manufactured by Aloe Vera of America, Inc. Exclusively for Forever Living Products 7501 East McCormick Parkway Scottsdale, Arizona 85258 USA	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S10	Green Grapy Realize White Whitening The Premium 100ml	Made in Korea Cosbiz International 7 Mandai Link #08-40 Mandai Connection Singapore 728653	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S11	Himalaya Herbals Clear Complexion Whitening Day Cream 50ml	Manufactured by The Himalaya Drug Company Makali, Bangalore 562 162, India Imported by The Himalaya Drug Company Pte Ltd 9 Temasek Boulevard #24-01 Suntec Tower Two Singapore 038989	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S12	Lancome Paris Blanc Expert Beautiful Skin Tone Brightening Cream 50ml	Lancome, Luxury Products LLC, New York, NY 10017 LS Cosmetics 1 George Street #19-01 One George Street Singapore 049145	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S13	Loreal Paris White Perfect Clinical Day Cream SPF19 PA+++ 50ml	Loreal Paris 16, Place Vendome 75001 Paris	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S14	Mizon Good Night White Sleeping Mask 80ml	Coson Co., Ltd. 40-20, Gajangsaneopseobuk-ro, Osansi, Gyeonggi-do	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S15	Panda's Dream White Magic Cream 50g	Made in Korea	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected
S16	Premier by Dead Sea Premier Prestige White New Enforced Formula Pearl Whitening Cream Complex 60ml	Made in Holyland Israel Premier Europe BV, Boekweitstraat 13, 2153 GK Nieuw-Vennep, The Netherlands	Not Detected (On Cream) Not Detected (On Soap)	Not Detected (On Cream) Not Detected (On Soap)	Not Detected (On Cream) 0.14 (On Soap)

S17	Royal Expert Whitening Cream 50ml	Owned by OEW Group Pte Ltd, Singapore Imported by Ortus Expert Cosmetics Sdn Bhd, No 13, Jalan Nilam 2, Tmn Perind Teknologi Tinggi, 47500 Subang Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia	Not Detected	Not Detected	3,604
S18	Secret Key Snow White Milky Lotion 120g	Zenpia Co., Ltd. 2F, 6, Hakdong-ro 11-gil, Gangnam-gu, Seoul, Korea	Not Detected	Not Detected	0.1
S19	SK-II Spots Care & Brighten Day Cream 25g	Made in Japan Imported/Distributed by Procter & Gamble (Singapore) Pte Ltd 11 North Buona Vista Drive #21-07 The Metropolis Tower 2 Singapore 138589	Not Detected	Not Detected	0.25
S20	Yves Rocher White Botanical Moisturizing Lightening Cream 50ml	Yves Rocher 56201 La Gacilly - France Made in Ireland Distributed by Luxyr Cosmetics Pte Ltd 12 Tai Seng Street #05-01 Singapore 534118	Not Detected	Not Detected	Not Detected

Annex B – Royal Expert Whitening Cream 50ml (S17)

