

HOLISTIC COSMETICS

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Summary

One of the fastest growing areas in the cosmetics industry is that of natural cosmetics. This is a direct result of people becoming aware of the difference between the use of *harmful* and *harmless* ingredients and the impact that these ingredients can have on us and on our environment.

But it is not enough to use natural ingredients; these ingredients must also be used in the right amounts in order to be effective.

Although the word "natural" has been much more popular than "holistic" when referring to cosmetics, recently the term "holistic cosmetics" has come to be used, too. In 2003, the Society of Cosmetic Chemists began presenting its biennial Holistic Cosmetics Symposium and Suppliers Show in the Twin Cities in Minnesota, USA.

We will be hearing the term, "holistic cosmetics" more frequently. The same is true of holistic medicine, holistic lifestyle and holistic treatments. As a society, we are now more aware that our future lies in a holistic approach to life, and to the environment.

Riassunto

Una delle aree di maggiore crescita dell'industria cosmetica è quella dei prodotti naturali.

Tale crescita è direttamente collegata alla crescente consapevolezza che i consumatori riservano agli ingredienti ritenuti più sicuri per gli esseri umani e per l'ambiente che ci circonda. Non è però sufficiente utilizzare ingredienti naturali, ma è importante soprattutto che essi vengano utilizzati nella giusta quantità affinché siano veramente efficaci.

Anche se il termine "naturale" per caratterizzare alcuni cosmetici è certamente più conosciuto del termine "olistico", quest'ultimo comincia ad essere usato sempre più spesso.

Infatti, nel 2003 l'associazione dei Chimici Cosmetologi Americani ha organizzato nel Minnesota un meeting su questo specifico tema.

Pertanto, a breve, comincerà ad essere utilizzato anche il termine cosmetica olistica, allo stesso modo e con la stessa frequenza con cui si parla sempre più spesso di medicina olistica o di stile di vita e trattamenti olistici.

E' per questa crescente tendenza che la nostra società, nel futuro, avrà certamente un approccio più olistico sia nei confronti della vita che dell'ambiente.

INTRODUCTION

Cosmetics are as old as vanity. They were very prized in ancient Egypt. Fragrant body oils with essential oils were very popular in Biblical times. The Bible contains 1,035 references to essential oils, aromatic plants, and their use.

One of the fastest growing areas in the cosmetics industry is that of natural cosmetics. This interest in natural personal care products is a direct result of people becoming aware of the difference between the use of *harmful* and *harmless* ingredients, and the impact that these ingredients can have on us and on our environment.

We have heard many times that the choice of food you eat is very important, and that the junk food can accelerate aging process. But how many times have we heard that cosmetics could accelerate aging process as well? Our skin absorbs the ingredients of the preparations that are applied to it through our pores. If the *harmful* chemical additives in food can hasten the aging process, how would these chemicals perform in cosmetics? They would perform exactly the same way; they would accelerate the aging process. And they do. Therefore, it is vital to view cosmetics in a holistic way, to be aware of the influence - both positive and negative - that different chemicals have on our whole body.

What does the term "holistic cosmetics" mean? Holistic cosmetics must be beneficial for the entire person; not only body, but mind and spirit as well. They shouldn't contain any *harmful* ingredients, but ingredients that are beneficial for the whole person, such as essential oils.

We will be hearing the term, "holistic cosmetics" more frequently. The same is true of holistic medicine or holistic lifestyle. As a society we are now more aware that our future lies in a holistic approach to life, and to the environment.

COSMETICS ARE AS OLD AS VANITY

Cosmetics were prized in ancient Egypt, since Egyptians were very concerned about their appearance. Archeologists discovered a stone tablet, which listed the formula for a remedy that could change "an old man into a young man"(1). For those interested in this discovery I can reveal that the main ingredient of this phenomenal preparation was fenugreek oil. As we can see, the main problem in cosmetics is still not solved - after thousands of years we are persistently looking for miracle, rejuvenating remedies.

In Biblical times, fragrant body oils with essential oils were very popular. The Bible contains 1,035 references to essential oils, aromatic plants, and their use (2).

Even though the Middle Age wasn't the best time for cosmetics, Saint Hildegard of Bingen left some formulas for cosmetic preparation; for example, she recommended barley water for rough, dry skin (3).

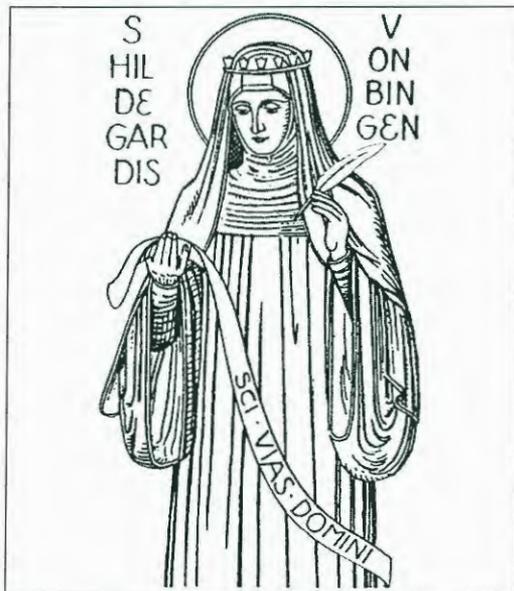


Fig. 1 Saint Hildegard of Bingen was a pioneer in Europe in using gemstones in skincare.

NATURAL COSMETICS

One of the fastest growing areas in the cosmetics industry is that of natural cosmetics. In addition to "natural cosmetics," this category includes the terms "organic cosmetics" and "holistic cosmetics." This interest in natural personal care products is a direct result of people becoming aware of the difference between the use of *harmful* and *harmless* ingredients, and the impact that these ingredients can have on us and on our environment.

Today, many people are concerned with living a healthy, holistic lifestyle. They are aware of global warming, and are trying hard to do something to prevent it. Small steps like recycling, saving energy, using natural personal care products, and supporting "green" companies are just the beginning. It is estimated that approximately eighty percent of Americans consider ecology when making their purchasing decisions. The problem is that people are confused about which companies are really "green," and which products are really "holistic", or "natural". This is not surprising, since the Food and Drug Administration still does not give a strict definition for the term "natural cosmetic" and "the term organic means whatever manufacturer says it performs" (4). Because of this, many cosmetics companies advertise their products as natural, even though their cosmetics are just "dusted" with a few natural ingredients.

Why are customers looking for natural products? Are they really beneficial? We've heard many times that the choice of food you eat is very important, and that junk food can accelerate the aging process. But how many times do we hear that cosmetics can accelerate the aging process as well? I'd say not too many, if at all.

The skin is the body's largest organ. Skin absorbs the ingredients of the preparations that are applied to it through its pores. This is why prescription medication is effective when used in

the form of patches worn directly on the skin. This is why we must be very careful when we choose our cosmetics. If *harmful* chemical additives in junk food can accelerate aging, it's logical to expect the same results from cosmetics containing *harmful* chemical additives. Researchers at the Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine in Japan found that cosmetics with methylparaben can cause skin to age when it is exposed to the sun. According to environmental writer Simon Pitman, Professor Toshikazu Yoshikawa told *The Asahi Shimbun*, Japan's leading newspaper, "I think women should avoid strong and direct sunshine when wearing cosmetics containing methylparaben"(5) also if the real exposure-response relationship of a chemical has to be seriously verified by the modern epidemiology also (6).

We know that some chemicals actually accumulate over time in the body and other studies should be necessary to demonstrate their real safety. Therefore, it is vital to view cosmetics in a holistic way, to be aware of the influence - both positive and negative - that different chemicals have on our whole body.



Fig. 2 Close contact with nature is an important element of holistic lifestyle.



Fig. 3 Taking care of natural resources is a vital part of holistic approach to life.

WHY HOLISTIC COSMETICS ?

Although the word “natural” has been much more popular than “holistic,” when referring to cosmetics, the term “holistic cosmetics” has recently come to be used, too. In 2003, the Society of Cosmetic Chemists began presenting its biennial Holistic Cosmetics Symposium and Suppliers Show in the Twin Cities in Minnesota, USA.

What does the term “holistic cosmetics” mean? What is the difference between “natural cosmetics” and “holistic cosmetics”? Holism refers to the idea that an entity is greater than the sum of its parts. So how can be this definition applied to cosmetics? Truly holistic cosmetics must be beneficial for the entire person - not only body, but mind and spirit as well. They cannot contain any harmful ingredients. To the contrary, holistic cosmetics should contain ingredients that are valuable for the whole person, ingredients that could be also used as supplements. Let’s concentrate on a few examples:

Green Tea is so healthy that it is called “China’s fountain of youth”. Because it is a great antioxidant, green tea is also used in cosmetics (7).

Glyceryl monolaurate is a main component of a self-preserving system that was discovered by

Prof. Dr. Jon J. Kabara many years ago. Glyceryl monolaurate was found in Mother’s Milk, Saw Palmetto, and other natural products (8). It helps support the immune system, and it is recommended as a supplement.

Pearls are admired in China and Japan. People from this region use cosmetics with pearl powder, and take pearl powder internally as a nutritional supplement. They believe that pearls can help them stay young longer. From my own experience I can add that good quality pearl powder is absorbed by skin surprisingly fast.

GEMSTONES IN COSMETICS

Gemstones have been used in cosmetics since ancient times. Egyptians were using powdered malachite as eye paint (9). Saint Hildegard from Bingen recommended amethyst for acne. Gemstones are still very popular in some regions.

In Europe - especially in Baltic countries – holistic medicine practitioners recommend amber elixir. Amber is also used in cosmetics. It is said to smooth and nourish the skin, add elasticity, and protect it from the sun’s rays.

In recent years, scientists have begun to show an interest in using gems in cosmetics. In 2002, the Journal of Cosmetic Science published the paper “Investigation of jewelry powders radiating far-infrared rays and the biological effects on human skin.” In this article, scientists from the Skin Research Institute, Pacific Corp. in Korea wrote about their experiments with tourmaline and jade powders. They obtained very promising results, and they said that these powders “show great potential for utilization as cosmetics’ raw materials” (10).

“Skin is alive, and lifeless chemicals cannot give life back to the skin”

Pratima Raichur (11)

According to the definition of holism, in addition to being beneficial for the whole body, holistic cosmetics should be beneficial to the mind and spirit. If a woman feels attractive, people will consider her to be attractive. Without a doubt, it is easier to feel good wearing cosmetics that contain uplifting essential oils.

Here we come to aromatherapy. Many women know that essential oils can influence our mood. Those who use these wonderful oils experience the refreshing properties of peppermint, the relaxing quality of lavender, and many other qualities from other varieties of these oils. And we know from history that Queen Cleopatra of Egypt was told to use roses to help her to seduce Mark Anthony.

Essential oils are very useful in skin care and hair care. Many of them have rejuvenating properties, and they can stimulate new cell growth and prevent wrinkles (e.g., lavender, neroli, and frankincense)(12). “Cellular regeneration is the key to a youthful skin, and essential oils provide a way of doing this which is far more pleasant than the most recent methods which involve using fetal cells” expressed Valerie Ann Worwood. It would be good to remember this statement today, when some companies market new anti-aging creams that are advertised as “stem cell technology”(13).

Essential oils are the most powerful free radicals scavengers. Scientists at Tufts University in Massachusetts, USA, have developed the ORAC (Oxygen Radical Absorption Capacity) test to compare the capability of different substances to fight free radicals. The higher the number, the greater antioxidant properties the substance has (2). Below are presented ORAC test results from

“Healing Oils of the Bible” by Dr. David Steward:

TABLE I

Antioxidant (ORAC) Scores for Selected Fruits and Vegetables

Carrots	210
Oranges	750
Beets	840
Raspberries	1,220
Strawberries	1,540
Blueberries	2,400
Wolfberries	25,300

TABLE II

Antioxidant (ORAC) Scores for Selected Essential Oils

Sandalwood	1,655
Juniper	2,517
Rosemary	3,309
Rose of Sharon (Cistus)	38,624
Cinnamon Bark	103,448
Thyme	159,590
Clove	10,786,875



Fig. 4 Scientists have proved that tourmaline can be a valuable ingredient in cosmetics.

As we see, essential oils have the highest free radicals scavengers' capability. This property alone should make them desirable cosmetics

components. Essential oils also have the highest electromagnetic frequencies of all known substances. The highest is Rose Oil at 320. The results for some other oils: Lavender - 118 MHz; German Chamomile - 105 MHz. and Peppermint - 78 MHz.

By comparison: fresh fruits and vegetables: 5-10 MHz, fresh herbs 20-27 MHz, processed food measured zero.

“Measurements on the human body found that a healthy person has a frequency around 62-68 MHz. When a person’s frequency dips to 58 MHz, cold symptoms can manifest. Flu symptoms start at 57 MHz. Cancer can begin when the body falls below 42 MHz. The process of dying begins at 25 MHz and goes to zero at death”. By applying essential oils we can increase our body’s frequency.

CONCLUSION

In order to make extraordinary cosmetics, most companies today seem to prefer the newest discoveries from the lab. Perhaps they should once again start looking to Mother Nature for natural, time-proven ingredients – like essential oils or gemstones.

We do have natural, valuable ingredients that can be used in cosmetics, and we don’t have to use harmful chemicals. As dr. Kurt Schnaubelt pointed in his book “Advanced Aromatherapy. The Science of Essential Oil Therapy”: “Most of the synthetic substances used in cosmetics today do not take part in metabolic processes of cell reproduction, and cause undesired or toxic effects if used over a significant period. In contrast, plant-derived products are active and have remarkable therapeutic effects if used with “the proper cosmetic base material” (*emphasis mine*) (14). Yes, this is exactly what we can do. We can’t change the cosmetics industry at once, but we should stop using harmful, toxic cosmetics ingredients.

And coming back to the definition of holistic cosmetics, one thing is certain. Even though there may be differences on the exact definition of "holistic", we will be hearing the term, “holistic cosmetics” more frequently. The same is true of holistic medicine, holistic lifestyle and holistic treatments. As a society we are now more aware that our future lies in a holistic approach to life, and to the environment.

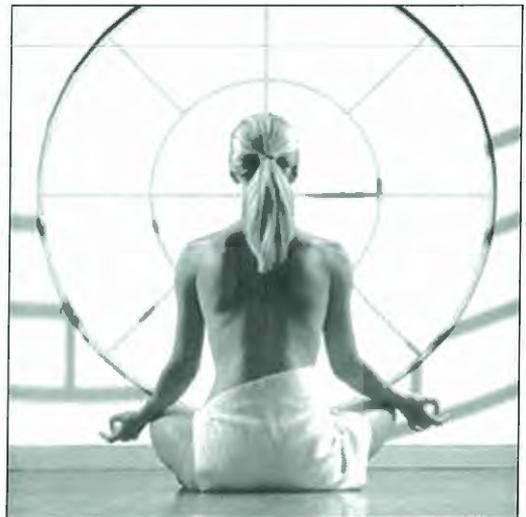


Fig. 5 Holistic approach to life is not limited only to meditation.

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