



Aesthetics of hair: A sociodemographic study

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Abstract

Background and Objective: As the saying goes that “hair in fact is probably the bane of most women’s lives.” Hair care aesthetics is concerned with process of beautification of hair. The current perspective in hair care is not just concerned with cleansing, but the focus has been shifted to prevent hair damage at molecular level. The objective of this study was to correlate the use of various hair cares by women depending on various sociodemographic strata.

Design and Setting: A cross-sectional survey was conducted on 100 females who attended Dermatology Outpatient Department at a Tertiary and Primary Care Centre, Davangere, Karnataka, India open to the general public.

Materials and Methods: A pre-structured questionnaire about hair care products and cleansing was used to randomly assess 100 women.

Results: In our study, 100 females were evaluated in age group of 11-60 years and participants were explained the purpose of the study, we found that about 51% women cleansed their hair once a week. Major cleanser was shampoos used by 78% and soap nut was the least used cleanser in 2%. Hair conditioners were used by 27%. 74% women used hair oil once a week. Hair gel was used by 12%, 14% women used hair sprays. 16% women had colored their hair at least once in their life time. 25% used hair colors for graying of hair. Branded and special hair care products were used most commonly in women of high socioeconomic status. Middle-class women used shampoos most commonly and cleansed hair once a week. Soap nut and no cleanser were more commonly used by women of low socioeconomic status.

Conclusion: Women consider hair as vital part of their body and trichologists play a focal role in addressing their queries with regard to various cleansers and branded hair care products.

Introduction

Healthy hair is used to describe smooth, silky hair with luster, with adequate volume, and no evidence of baldness. Most hair care products act at cuticle and some may act on architecture of whole of shaft. Understanding the structure and biomechanics of various hair care products is essential. Beautification of hair is nearly a complex task.^[1]

There is a spectrum of wide range of hair products in vast range available in the market suitable for all types of hair - normal hair, damaged hair, dry and lusterless hair, oily hair, colored hair, and gray hair. Many products also aid in styling of hair such as straightening, curls, add gloss, and enhance the volume.

This article in brief will focus on the various hair care products required for cleansing and maintenance of hair used by women depending on the sociodemographic data. Cleansers range from

shampoos to soap. Conditioners, hair gel, hair sprays, hair oil, hair colors, and hair sprays also aid in beautification of hair.

Materials and Methods

The study was based on a cross-sectional survey conducted on females, who attended Dermatology outpatient clinic at Tertiary and primary care centre in Davangere, Karnataka, India. The data were collected from patients while waiting at the outpatient, from August to October 2015.

The specially designed pre-structured questionnaire was used to analyze 100 females. The final set of questionnaire included 20 questions. This study was approved by the ethical committee. Personal information including age, marital status, educational level, occupation, and household average monthly income, was collected. In addition, the questionnaire also requested detailed information

regarding the use of hair cleansers, hair conditioners, hair gels, hair sprays, hair oil, and miscellaneous home made products.

Results

The questionnaire was used to assess 100 females, the socioeconomic demographic data are shown in Table 1.

Association between sociodemographic data and hair cleansing

Participants with higher and middle socioeconomic strata (10,000 SR-20000 and above) used shampoos (78%) mainly for primary action of shampoos 55% and 23% used shampoos for secondary mechanism of shampoos, where as 8% women of lower socioeconomic status used no cleanser (≤ 2000 SR) and 2% used soapnut as cleanser as shown in Graph 1. Younger participants in age group of 15-25 years, preferred to use hair gel (9% of 12%) and hair sprays (10% of 14%) when compared to older population and preferred to change their shampoos every 6 months. Hair dyes was common in age group of 20-30 years compared to study by Dharmistha *et al.* mehendi application was more in age group of 45-65 years, 25% women used hair dyes to color gray hair. Higher class women (20%) used ample quantities of shampoos and branded shampoos 3 times a week on an average compared to women of low socioeconomic status who used only one packet of shampoo a week and frequency of hair wash was once a week (8%) or once in 10 days (3%). Bar soaps were used by 12% women mostly by middle-class women.

Conditioners were used more commonly in age group of 11-30 years in higher class 21% out of 27% in the study; conditioners were commonly used by educated women.

74% women used hair oil at least once a week, higher class women used almond oil, olive oil, jasmine oil, and coconut oil, lower class women used pure coconut oil commonly.

Hard water was commonly used to cleanse by low- and middle-class (20%). Illiterate women preferred to use native medication products before cleansing as per culture.

Conditioners with sunscreens, ultraviolet (UV) reflector hair care products, camouflage hair care products were used by women of higher class and educated women.

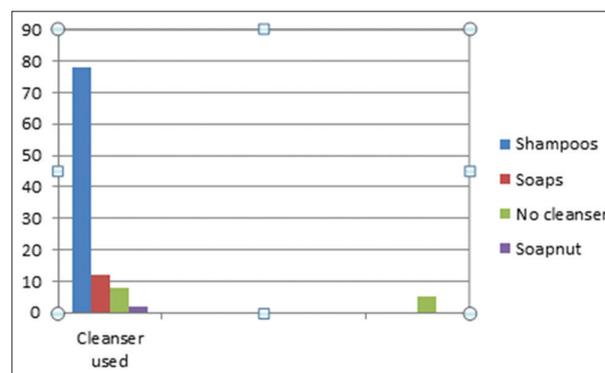
Discussion

Women consider hair as vital part of their body, hair cosmetic, and aesthetic hair care procedures on hair are rampantly involving and hair care beauty industry is growing like ever before and beautifying hair is a task of complexity.

Healthy hair suggests healthy body, normal healthy hair is well pigmented, glossy, smooth, and able to bear shear forces, on average women possesses four to eight square meters of hair surface. In middle 1900s, bar soaps were used to get rid of dirt, followed by evolvement of shampoos and presently hair are primarily addressed by hair shampoos and conditioners followed by usage of hair gel, hair colors for secondary modification of hair.

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants in the study

Variables	Females
Age group	
11-20	12
21-30	28
31-40	26
41-50	21
51-60	13
Marital status	
Single	27
Married	62
Widow	07
Divorced	04
Education	
Illiterate	16
High school	49
University or higher	35
Occupation	
Student	25
Employed	55
Unemployed	20
Socioeconomic status	
≤ 2000 SR	11
2000-5000 SR	19
5000-10000 SR	18
≥ 10000 SR	25



Graph 1: Use of cleansers in women

Bar soaps are used less commonly nowadays, as they leave a scum after wash with hard water leading to inappropriate cleansing of hair and also may be a factor for seborrheic dermatitis.^[1] In our reasons cited for not using bar soaps were that it did not provide enough lather and not suitable for oily hair.

Various studies have shown that when compared to soaps, shampoos are better in respect to their pH.^[2]

Shampoos are liquid preparations used commonly as cleansers. They act not only on scalp but also on hair shaft.^[3] In addition to cleansing, the other added effects are to increase gloss to hair, UV light protection and also act on mechanical properties of hair, the art of shampoo formulation is to choose right shampoo depending on condition of scalp. Advances in technology in shampoo formulations have replaced soap bases with complex formulations that contain functional and aesthetic derivatives.^[4] In our study, shampoos were used for its both primary and secondary function, fragrance, color, cost, conditioner in shampoo, etc., were the factors consumers looked into before selecting a shampoo.

Consumers expectation vary with regard to shampoos depending on type of hair, condition of scalp, season, age, and lifestyle.^[5] The diversities that people are demanding nowadays in a shampoo are going beyond its prime function.^[6]

Conditioners impart antistatic properties to hair, gloss, and aids in manageability, conditioner consists of gel network which gives a superior dry feel, silicone particles add to opacity to conditioners. They are also used to recondition hairs following chemical treatment^[4] an ideal conditioner if it existed would need to match the natural properties of sebum.^[7] We found that conditioners were mostly used by middle and high socioeconomic status people, very few women had knowledge of sunscreen in conditioners.

Hair industry has provided us with numerous products for styling such as hair sprays, hair gels, hair mousses, shine sprays, and range of camouflage products.^[7]

Hair gels add to styling of hair and add to increased volume, hair sprays also aids in styling and to create stiffness of hair. Hair sprays containing PPG-3 benzyl ether myristate shows greater enhancement of shine in medium and light color hair.^[8] We found that hair gels and other hair cosmetics were mostly used by younger generation as matter of style and to improve looks.

Hair dyes can be permanent or temporary, they are used to brighten hair dyes may be used in older age to color gray hair or in youths as symbol of style or beauty.

The base of trichology has been shifted to availability of ample range of hair care products such as camouflage products or cover sticks, hair shine sprays, heat protective measures such as UV reflectors, hair bleaching, hair highlighting, and conditioners with sunscreen hair perming or hair straightening products.

What is new in the current trichology market

Hair care technology has advanced the cleansing, protection, and restoration properties of hair that act on hair shaft. Currently, scientists are focusing to improve the physical and chemical characteristics of hair at a molecular level and there by improving the over all aesthetics of hair.

Pediatric shampoos have got over whelming response due to current concept of “no tears” and preferred by many women for their children. Silicon oil as microemulsions are incorporated in many conditioners to improve texture and add strength to individual shafts of hair, alpha hydroxy acids added reduce the pH, azo dyes are incorporated in dyes which acts by thermal mechanism. Argan oil in shampoos nourishes, hydrates hair, and sun screen sprays with conditioner to give resilient feel to hair and lock in protection from sun.

“Silver shampoo” is an example of a temporary dye used by women with gray hair to give silver hair look.^[7]

The current trend is to add vitamins, tea tree oil, and glycolic acid in shampoos. Professional shampoos are designed for salon use, they have special ingredients that are not available in normal shampoos.

Conclusion

Healthy skin, beautiful hair are desired by every women, the demand for hair care products that give a smooth look and feel has created a huge success in hair cosmetic industry. Newer products are in stream line, dermatologists, and trichologist should be updated about the formulations, mechanism, and adverse effects of these products to choose the right product depending on the condition.

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