The Oxybenzone Containing Sunscreen Ban: A Formula for Future Skin Cancers?

SKIN-The Journal of Cutaneous Medicine® Article: Oxybenzone and Sunscreens: A Critical Review of the Evidence and a Plan for Discussion with Patients

NEW YORK, NY, USA, September 11, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A ban on the usage of oxybenzone, a common, inexpensive ingredient found in most sunscreens, has been signed into law in Hawaii and goes into effect in January 2021. This will lead to more than 70% of the currently available sunscreens being unavailable to residents and visitors in Hawaii.

> "Weighing a theoretical risk of coral damage versus a clear [skin cancer prevention] benefit from sunscreen usage and then prohibiting patients from obtaining over 70% of sunscreens is not beneficial."
>
> *Rachel Mirsky*

An article published today in SKIN: The Journal of Cutaneous Medicine states that the science does not have enough evidence to support an outright ban on oxybenzone. Rachel Mirsky and colleagues state, in their opinion, "there is laboratory evidence to suggest oxybenzone has negative environmental effects, but these experiments were not representative of real-world conditions and thus results are inconclusive." The authors recognize the importance of further research, but they contend that the overwhelming evidence that shows regular sunscreen use can prevent skin cancer suggests that this ban may be harmful in the future.

They thoroughly analyze several key questions in the oxybenzone debate including: 1) Is oxybenzone the reason for coral bleaching? 2) Is there data to suggest that oxybenzone is harmful to humans? 3) Why is oxybenzone used in the majority of US sunscreens? and 4) Are there other potential problems with oxybenzone restrictions that could lead to more skin cancer in the future?

Supporters of the law claim that oxybenzone causes damage to the coral reefs around Hawaii. Opponents of the law call into question the validity of the scientific studies done to show that oxybenzone might damage coral reefs. Given these controversies, it is critical that the public has a clear understanding of the underlying issues related to oxybenzone.

After a careful review of the evidence, the authors conclude that, in their opinion, there is little definitive scientific research supporting the associated concerns. Given the benefits of oxybenzone-containing sunscreens in skin cancer prevention, this ban is premature. In addition, they suggest that banning an ingredient commonly used in most sunscreens may lead to confusion among consumers and have the untoward outcome of less sunscreen being used overall leading to a potential future skin cancer increase.

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Link to article

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