

SCHOOL OF **PUBLIC HEALTH**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Background

Cosmetologists, estheticians, and nail technicians are exposed to a range of chemicals while working with personal care products, and have an increased risk of injury and poor health outcomes. These workers may have low wages, lack employer-sponsored health insurance, or lack coverage under workers' compensation insurance.¹ Within their indust consumer protections are emphasized to prevent spread of disease or injuries, but occupational health and safety education for workers is comparatively lacking.²

Occupational health and safety training is important to reduce workers exposures, but little information is known about their current knowled attitudes and beliefs about occupational safety and health.³

This qualitative study explores the relationship between work and heal among one group of occupations—cosmetologists, estheticians, and na technicians—that has an increased risk of injury and poor health outcomes. The study aims to understand the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about work-related exposures in this population.

Objectives

Primary: To describe the job characteristics, knowledge and attitude about occupational health and safety, and occupational health concer among cosmetologists, estheticians, and nail technicians.

Secondary: To identify the survey preferences of this population of wor in preparation for developing a statewide survey.

Methods

Focus Groups

Purposive and referral sampling methods were used to identify and rec a convenience sample of cosmetologists, estheticians and nail technicia Focus groups (n=3) were conducted in-person with study participants a two cosmetology schools and the Minnesota Board of Cosmetology wit the Twin Cities metro area.

The semi-structured interviews asked participants about their job characteristics, job tasks and services, behaviors and knowledge about occupational safety and protections from hazards, health concerns rela to their work, and their survey format preferences.

Participants

Nine people who worked as cosmetologists, estheticians, and nail technicians participated in the focus groups, and ranged from relatively new professionals to salon owners with many years of experience, educators, and salon managers.

Analysis

Audio recordings of the focus groups were transcribed and reviewed fo predetermined and emerging themes.

Understanding the Occupational Health and Safety Knowledge and Behaviors Among Cosmetologists in Minnesota

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y also	a Doctoral Student, Division of b Professor, Division of B c Assistant Professor, Division
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rs'	The following themes emerged from the analysis of focus grou
dge,	Job Characteristics Occupational Exposur and Health Concerns
alth nail	Complex Job Structures Product Knowledge
d	 Types of employment arrangements vary (e.g., full/part time—hourly wage or commission; self-employed; contract employee) Workers were not able to chemicals in the product Familiar with brand nam
des	 Workers do not typically have traditional job benefits (e.g., employer-sponsored health insurance, paid time off, maternity leave, etc.) Use gloves, but only for activities (e.g., cleaning Increase ventilation or a fresh air (e.g., propping salon door, using dust ex-
erns	 Range of Job Tasks and Job Adjust workstation to perform to pe
ecruit tans. at vithin	 Often provide a range of services: hairstyling, haircutting, hair dying or bleaching, hair treatments, facials, hair removal (waxing), eyelash extensions, nail treatments, acrylic nails May provide many services or specialize in one area (e.g., hairstyling only) Job tasks include providing services, cleaning tools, cleaning the salon May have multiple roles (e.g., owner or educator or manager and direct service provider) Some professionals work off-site (e.g., event venue) with little control over their work environment Often provide a range of services, cleaning tools, cleaning the salon May have multiple roles (e.g., owner or educator or manager and direct service provider) Some professionals work off-site (e.g., event venue) with little control over their work environment
t lated	"I work freelance, so I'm self- employed. And my day-to-day is, it's different every day, but it "But I think there's a physical inch of your body in this spe from your muscles even dow
ly	involves traveling to my site and then I would do makeup applications and hair styling usually 60 [hours] is a pretty standard work week for me I don't have any benefits." your skin. I mean that just content to the second
^F or	References ¹ Norlien, K. G., Landsteiner, A., Williams, A., & Carlson, A. (2017). Occupational Health Survey of Cosmet Minnesota. <i>Journal of Environmental Health, 79</i> (9), 8–15.

Minnesota. Journal of Environmental Health, 79(9), 8–15.

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Results

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² Quach, T., Gunier, R., Tran, A., Von Behren, J., Doan-Billings, P. A., Nguyen, K. D., ... Reynolds, P. (2011). Characterizing workplace exposures in Vietnamese women working in California nail salons. American Journal of Public Health, 101(SUPPL. 1). https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2010.300099

³ James, L. (2014). *Policy Report: How Safe is Your Nail Salon?* New York, NY.

Conclusions

Cosmetologists, estheticians and nail technicians described working within complex employment structures, and with little access to employersponsored benefits.

Workers did not report regularly using personal protective equipment or other methods to prevent chemical exposures from the products they use.

Workers identified several physical and mental stressors—primarily ergonomics and social fatigue, anxiety, and stress—but were less concerned with chemical exposures.

Some respondents indicated that they trusted the product brands and had been using the chemicals without protections for years without adverse problems.

These professionals reported that they rely substantially on knowledge sharing between peers, and getting occupational health and safety knowledge and training from their school training and continuing education.

These results, and future studies, can inform the development of occupational health and safety trainings for this workforce, including chemical hazard communication activities.

Next Steps

These results will inform the development of a statewide, online survey related to knowledge and attitudes about occupational health and safety. The survey will be emailed to the approximately 32,000 cosmetologists, estheticians, and nail technicians licensed by the Minnesota Board of Cosmetology.

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