



Skin Lightening Products and Levels of Depression among Filipino Emerging Adults: A Cross-Sectional Study

ZJG Regencia^{1,2,*}, M Gamalo³, MAJ Ladia^{1,2}, JC Montoya⁴, JP Gouin⁵, and ES Baja^{1,2}

1. Department of Clinical Epidemiology, College of Medicine, University of the Philippines-Manila; 2. Institute of Clinical Epidemiology, National Institutes of Health University of the Philippines-Manila; 3. Global Biometrics & Data Management, Pfizer Innovative Health, USA; 4. Department of Medicine, College of Medicine, University of the Philippines-Manila; 5. Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts and Science, Concordia University, Canada;

*Corresponding Author: zgregencia@up.edu.ph



Introduction

A limited number of studies on skin-lightening products (SLP) consumption have been done in the Philippines. We assessed the association between SLP use and perceptions and depression levels.

Methods

A cross-sectional self-administered online survey collected data from Filipinos aged 18 to 29, including a Southeast Asian questionnaire on the use and perceptions of SLP and DASS-21 for depression levels. Associations between SLP knowledge, perception, and use, and depression levels were estimated using generalized linear models with a Poisson distribution, adjusted for age, sex, sexual orientation, working status, relationship status, residence type, education, media usage (movies, television, social media, and internet), and average household income. Effect estimates were expressed as an adjusted Prevalence Ratio (aPR) with 95% confidence interval (95%CI). UP Manila has approved the ethical clearance of this study (UPMREB: 2022-0407-01)

Table 1. Adjusted prevalence ratios (aPR) with 95% confidence interval (95%CI) for the association between knowledge, perception, and use of skin-lightening products, and mental health outcomes adjusted for age (young adult or adult), sex at birth (male or female), sexual orientation (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, or preferred not to say), average monthly income, (in Philippine Pesos) working status (yes or no), highest educational attainment (elementary, high school, college, post-graduate studies, vocational course or did not go to school), relationship status (single or in a relationship), type of residence (urban or rural), and different media use (low or high use of movies, television, internet, and social media), with risk of having severe/extreme levels of depression.

Skin Lightening Parameters	Effect Estimates	
	aPR (95%CI)	p-values
Knowledge on the active ingredients in SLPs.		
Do not know	1.00	
Knows	0.90 (0.80-1.01)	0.08
Perceived benefits of lighter skin tone index		
Low	1.00	
High	1.21 (1.07-1.38)	0.003
Frequency of Use of skin lightening practices		
Never	1.00	
At least once a day	0.80 (0.89-0.93)	0.003
At least once a week	0.76 (0.64-0.91)	0.002
At least once a month	0.80 (0.63-1.01)	0.06
Once over the past three months	1.09 (0.91-1.31)	0.91

Results

The study recruited 3,127 respondents who were mostly females (67%). Approximately 26% of the respondents had severe/extreme depression. Participants with high perceived SLP benefits were 21% more at risk of experiencing severe/extreme depression (aPR: 1.21; 95% CI: 1.07-1.38) than those with low perceived SLP benefits. Furthermore, the likelihood of having severe/extremely depression levels is decreased by 20% (aPR: 0.80; 95% CI: 0.89-0.93) and 23% (aPR: 0.76; 95% CI: 0.64-0.91) for those who use SLP once a day and once a week, respectively, relative to those who do not use SLP.

Conclusion

High depression levels among Filipino emerging adults are prevalent. This study suggests that frequent use of SLP among Filipino emerging adults is associated with decreased risk of having severe/extreme levels of depression relative to those who do not use SLP.



Presented at the ECTMIH 2023 | University Medical Center Utrecht, The Netherlands | November 20 to 23, 2023