Finland listens to the science on BPA

BY STEVEN HENTGES, PH.D ON AUGUST 15, 2016 IN INDUSTRY, MEDIA

The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health and the National Institute for Health and Welfare recently released a report on exposure of hairdressers to several chemicals, one of which was bisphenol A (BPA). First for the bottom line: “According to the results, hairdressers in Finland are not exposed to…bisphenol A…any more than the rest of the population.”

You’re probably not reading this blog because you’re interested in the health of Finnish hairdressers, but this seemingly innocuous finding reveals several important points about the safety of BPA. For some time, concerns have been raised that hairdressers may be exposed to unsafe levels of various chemicals from use of hair care products in the salon. We can now be sure that BPA is not one of them.

Even if you’re not a hairdresser, this conclusion is still worth noting, assuming you use hair care products. If hairdressers, applying hair care products throughout their workdays are not exposed to BPA, it seems highly likely that consumers using the same products on their own hair would also not be exposed to BPA.

The report’s findings shouldn’t be surprising—BPA has no known use in hair care products, or other personal care products for that matter. Even though BPA is primarily used to make polycarbonate and epoxy resins, there’s a common misconception that BPA is an “everywhere chemical.” (If you don’t believe me, google “everywhere chemical BPA” to see what “facts” the internet has to offer.)

Perhaps most importantly, the conclusion of this new report is consistent with the views of many other government bodies worldwide that have reviewed BPA. The Finnish report concluded that “the measured urinary concentrations of these chemicals are below the available health-based guidance values,” meaning no health risks were identified.

Similarly, the European Food Safety Authority recently concluded that “BPA poses no health risk to consumers of any age group (including unborn children, infants and adolescents) at current exposure levels.” Even more to the point, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration answers the question “Is BPA safe?” with the straightforward answer “Yes.” They’re all just listening to the science on BPA.