

PATCH Survey : Report ***(Products Available To Camouflage Hands)***

BASC were invited to present the PATCH Survey findings at the Vitiligo Society's Annual Conference in London (8th November 2014). It was an opportunity to announce the outcomes and to advise on what happens next.

BASC have been aware since the 1950's that camouflage is a great support mechanism, but it may create vulnerability – most notably over hands and other salient areas because it,

- quickly washes off
- it is easily removed with emollients (including some sun blocks

and

it can rub off and soil

- clothing
- paper and objects
- computers and mobiles

and embarrassingly, it may transfer to another when we shake their hand.



If this “rubbing off” could be overcome, the potentials would be enormous.

BASC knew that faux tans might help, but had no evidence to support efficacy; and we also knew that faux tans are designed for skin groups 1 and 2 and not for everyone. Then, sometimes the finger of fate takes a hand (excuse the pun). When Jennifer Viles accepted BASC's invitation of a bursary (free place) at our September 2011 training event (so that the Vitiligo Society could provide its own camouflage service for its members), the FIRST THING she said was “how do we keep camouflage on hands?” Discussions followed and we decided that a PATCH Survey would highlight the problems. Our collaboration included making appointments to speak to,

- the makers of faux tans
- makers of theatrical products
- makers of long lasting cosmetics

We caught their curiosity and interest sufficiently for them to supply products to trial. Their only requirement was that there would be no compassions made between the brands and that their brand would remain anonymous. As the PATCH Survey would not be brand comparative, we were more than happy to agree these conditions.

To ensure “blind testing” Norma Bird and Liz Allen spent many hours decanting seven of the ten brands used into identical plain bottles (the other three products were not in liquid format). The next task was to agree the questionnaire and to ask for funding to cover base costs. Having secured equal funding from both the BASC and Vitiligo Society, we needed to recruit volunteers to take part. 34 volunteered at the launch on 17th August 2013 (9 were from skin groups 3-6 and 25 from skin groups 1-2) plus a “control” (someone who does not have vitiligo). Participants were allocated a unique number, which meant Pam Davidson (who analysed the results) had no idea who said what; neither did she know what brand was which.

We were delighted that 32 (plus the control) complied with the 6-month long survey and returned their questionnaires on time to Pam. It's sad, but true, that when research doesn't achieve its anticipated, or desired outcome (which is to confirm what the commissioners set out to achieve), then inevitably it gets filed away and unpublished. Both BASC and the Vitiligo Society agreed that whatever the outcome, we would publish the results.

There is a rumour that faux tan does not stain the skin of someone who has vitiligo and is also diabetic. Chris Williams (the Vitiligo Society's Dermatologist) and the BASC's Patrons Andrew Wright (Dermatologist) and Beryl de Souza (Plastic Surgeon) could not suggest any medical reason to substantiate this; so to sate everyone's curiosity, we included questions relating to the participants' medical history.

We got very excited when the **ONLY DIABETIC** participant reported that two brands lasted 3 and 10 hours respectively.....but then any hope that we had stumbled upon a medical implication was dashed because the other three faux tan brands tested had a duration; of between 2-3 days each. As the participant had stated an overactive thyroid too – could this be a contributing factor? Curiously, seven others also had an over or under active thyroid, who reported the durability of the faux tans as,

- duration between 1-7 days (6 with underactive thyroid)
- duration between 1-3 days (1 with overactive thyroid)

Reports from the other medical histories are,

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1 with epilepsy | all brands lasted 2 days |
| 1 with high cholesterol | brands lasted 1 to 4 days |
| 2 with arthritis | one brand (15 hours) others lasted 2½ to 4 days |
| 3 with psoriasis | two participant stated two brands washed off immediately but the other brands lasted a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 6 days (so we assume desquamation of plaques did not have an effect) |
| 6 with hypertension | two participants stated two brands washed off after a few hours but all stated the other brands duration was a minimum of 2 days and a maximum of 7 |

15 participants stated that they **had no medical condition** (other than vitiligo) of which one person reported that one faux tan brand did not take at all, that 3 other products lasted 2-5 hours, but one brand over 24 hours.

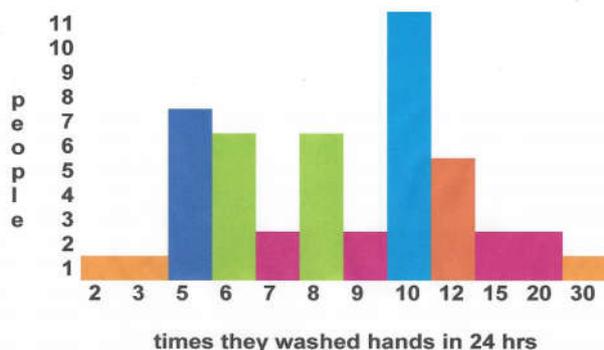
**given the evidence
no conclusion could be made that the duration of a faux tan was affected by people with vitiligo who also had other medical conditions**

Camouflage is easily removed with soap and water, so we asked how many times participants washed their hands each day. Everyone used toilet soap (either liquid or tablet), some of which might contain antibacterial properties, and a few used wet wipes. We had no method of measuring how “surgeon scrub-up” practices are, or if the usual areas (including fingertips) were missed, as reported in the *Journal of Community Nursing* (vol. 28 no.2 2014 *The importance of hand hygiene in preventing the spread of infection*).

There did not seem to be any relationship between longevity of faux tan products and frequency of washing hands.

Indeed, the participant who washed their hands up to 30 times each day still achieved a faux tan duration of 2 to 3 days

But, predictably, hand hygiene affected the stability of the other products tested.



Not knowing who would volunteer, an equal number of trial sets for Skin Groups 1 to 3 and Groups 4 to 6. The survey responses confirm no significant differences between the skin groups. We did not anticipate any product would be an acceptable skin match, but for half the participants this was so!

Questionnaires-Product numbered “a” was a traditional skin camouflage crème with powder and fixing spray applied to the volunteer at the launch day. Those numbered b 4 5 & 6 were theatrical and long lasting cosmetics; faux tans were numbered 1 2 3 7 & 8. Volunteers received an equal mix of cosmetics-faux tans to both 3-monthly trial periods.

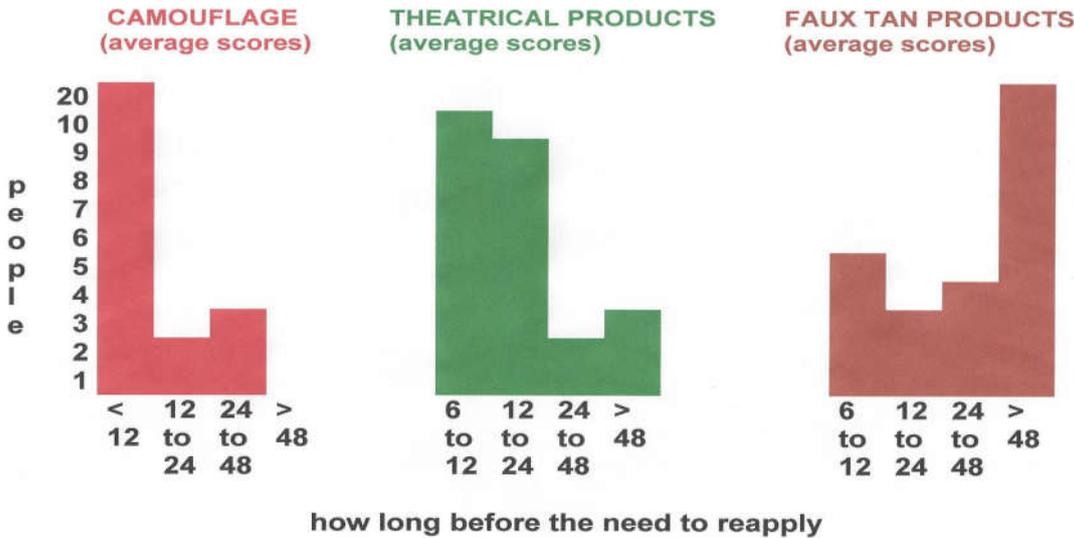
On average the theatrical products and traditional skin camouflage crème and powder took very little time to dry; faux tans took twice as long, or longer. A dissatisfaction with faux tans

was the time taken for a colour to develop – instant colour (seeing the final colour) was preferred.

All the products issued had a brush applicator, so it was a surprise that the favourite applicator was the pen. BASC appreciates that people prefer to have precision control when applying their camouflage, and that “blanket cover” by aerosol or similar method is quicker when application is to a large lesion or whole arm or legs.

Consensus was that all products smelt pleasant, or were acceptable; however, there were a few exceptions who considered some faux tans smelt of chemicals. Ten participants did not like the feel of camouflage-powder and fixing spray on their hands, but consensus was that overall the other products had a nice texture and pleasant to use.

Durability – Longevity of the products was as follows,



Now we have the evidence to take back to the Manufacturers and to ask them to consider making longer lasting cosmetics and faux tans in natural skin colours. At the time of going to print, BASC have spoken to FOUR manufacturers-distributors involved, and they have agreed to explore expanding their colour range. Additionally two manufacturers who were not involved have indicated to BASC that they too will consider creating faux tans that mimic the natural colour of all skin groups. We'll let you know how these exciting developments progress.

The PATCH Survey could not have taken place without the support of all involved, especially our happy band of volunteers! **So a b-i-g THANK YOU to all.**