

The Role of the FDA in Cosmetics

The job of our government is to keep the public safe. The FDA is meant to perform this duty through the regulation of foods and drugs allowed onto the market for citizens to consume. Cosmetics is another widely used group of products. People use them every day, and many assume that they have been proven safe before they can be sold. Due to the FDA's inability to regulate these products, this is far from the case. Cosmetics are being sold that have not been tested for safety. Cancer rates are also going up. There is a potential correlation between these two facts. Ultimately, potentially harmful products are being sold and consumed by Americans and currently the FDA has little power to regulate this. The products being sold in the U.S. need to be safe for its citizens and the only way to promote safety is to give the FDA the ability to regulate cosmetic products. Thus, the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act needs to be modified to allow for cosmetics to be regulated to promote the safety of the products being sold to Americans.

Without regulation, companies can sell almost whatever they want in the cosmetics industry. This allows for them to use cheap, potentially harmful ingredients in their products. Furthermore, because there are no rules, these companies have no incentives to test the safety of their products; there is no need for them to prove that they are safe before they can sell them. This coupled with the fact that most people believe that the government regulates these products and tests them for safety, most of the population is a risk without even realizing it. They are unknowingly using potentially harmful products that could be increasing their risk for cancer and disrupting their hormones. The FDA needs to be better equipped to protect American citizens. By allowing the regulation of cosmetic products, companies will be forced to prove that their products are safe before they are available for purchase. This will protect the health and safety of U.S. citizens.

Currently, there is little regulation of the cosmetic industry. The FDA lacks the power to control what companies sell and the ingredients in their products. Safety testing is not required to sell a product because the FDA has little regulation abilities. By giving the FDA the power to regulate the cosmetic industry, the safety and health of U.S. citizens will be the most important factor considered in the industry. Modifying the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act is essential to give the FDA the power it needs to properly protect American citizens from potentially dangerous cosmetic products.

By Rachael Cleveland
University of Oregon