

## Review Article

# Wedding ceremony and skin diseases; a need for vigilance!

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Marriage is a social union or legal contract between people that creates kinship. It is an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually intimate and sexual, are acknowledged in a variety of ways, depending on the culture or subculture in which it is found.<sup>1</sup>

There are customs and traditions associated with marriage that differ from one community to another. But, in almost all the populations, a marriage is often formalized via a wedding ceremony, may also be called matrimony.<sup>1</sup>

Marriage can be a potential "station" for skin diseases for the couples and beloved ones. The intersections between marriage and skin diseases lie in three main axes:

1. The traditions associated with marriage (other than wedding ceremony) might impose a potential cause for skin diseases.
2. Marriage, itself, might be the only cause for one of the couples to get infectious skin diseases (like warts or folliculitis) or sexually transmitted diseases (like HIV) from his or her counterpart. Future couples must treat their skin (including genital) diseases before coming close

together.

3. Due to the natural urge of the couple and their beloved ones to look good in the wedding ceremony, many complications mainly from cosmetics may occur at this time.

Below, we should concentrate on the third axis as the skin affection, in this regard, may not only involve the couples but also their relatives.

Wedding ceremony (matrimony) is considered the most important day of the life. So, everyone wants to and tries to be most prepared for this day. The young couples want to put in their best efforts but many of the times the overenthusiastic approach leads to various side-effects.

Women usually go for the "Pre-bridal" packages available at various parlours. These usually include massages, manicure, pedicure and waxing of the body hair including the private parts.

But women who undergo such procedures might face many problems due to:

1. Various side-effects of the procedures.
2. Use of substandard cosmetic products.
3. Untrained and unlicensed personnel.
4. Substandard environment of establishments.

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5. In many countries, there is yet no legislation regarding cosmetology procedures and cosmetic products.

### Side effects of procedures and products

1. Waxing under unclean environment can lead to erythema, tenderness, bacterial infections e.g. folliculitis and other dermatological conditions like pseudofolliculitis,<sup>2,3</sup> ingrown hair, pruritus, contact dermatitis, burns etc. A life-threatening *Streptococcus pyogenes* and herpes simplex virus infection of the external genitalia occurred in a 20-year-old diabetic woman following a routine perineal 'Brazilian' bikini wax.<sup>4</sup>
2. Shaving can also cause irritation, often caused by components of the shaving lubricant, and minor cuts can occur. Pseudofolliculitis barbae,<sup>2</sup> caused by the ingrowth of curly hair, is a fairly common side effect in some ethnic groups.
3. Use of a depilatory in the form of hair removal creams, gels, soaps and lotions might cause contact dermatitis, erythema, postinflammatory hyperpigmentation, irritation<sup>2</sup> etc.
4. Manicure with previously used and improperly disinfected tools can lead to infections like paronychia, dermatophytosis etc., as the same instruments might have been used on infected patients. Aggressive manicuring leads to ragged cuticles and cuticle damage, as the manicurist use the instruments to push the cuticle back from the nail plate.
5. Procedures done by untrained personnel can lead to injury to nails.
6. Products used during manicure and pedicure can cause brittleness of nails, permanent staining and deformities.

7. Various hair styling procedures like permanent straightening of hair requires use of various chemicals including sodium laurel sulphate which can lead to permanent damage to hair roots.

Most of the women put on make-up to look more beautiful and attractive. Side effects of various cosmetics include:

1. Cosmetic contact dermatitis<sup>5,6</sup> to various cosmetic products e.g. perfumes, hair dyes, nail cosmetics etc., because of chemicals present in them like isoeugenol, cinnamic aldehyde, cinnamic alcohol and hydroxycitronellal<sup>7,8</sup> etc. A well known example is bindi dermatitis<sup>9,10</sup> peculiar to India.
2. Contact urticaria due to ingredients like acetic acid, alcohol, parabens, menthol etc.
3. Photosensitization
4. Lichenoid eruptions due to hair dyes as these contain *para*-phenylenediamine (PPD).<sup>11</sup>
5. Acneiform eruptions due to lubricants, isopropyl myrisate, lanolin and its derivatives etc.
6. Various pigmentation disorders like Riehl's melanosis<sup>12,13</sup> because of the chemicals present in cosmetics e.g. dyes like D and C Red 31 and 17, lemon oil and geraniol in face powders and musk ambrette in incense etc.
7. Burning, stinging or itching sensation.
8. Many carcinogens have also been isolated from various products including parabens, commonly used as preservative in various anti-perspirants and deodorants.

### How can we tackle the problem?

Proper guidelines should be established regarding the establishment, operators and the

composition of various cosmetic products. Government should make proper legislation regarding establishment license and operator's license. Regular inspections should be carried out by the concerned department for the health and safety of the public.

General public should be informed regarding the various side-effects of cosmetology procedures via various methods like media. People should be made aware regarding following:

1. The establishment license should be posted in the reception area.
2. Each operator's license should be posted at his or her work station.
3. Health and safety poster regarding common side-effects should be displayed in the reception area.
4. There should be adequate ventilation for release of fumes created by artificial nail procedures, various chemicals used in hair procedures etc.
5. The salon should have clean working equipment and a clean work area<sup>14</sup>.
6. Make sure the operator never uses the same tools that were just used on someone else without disinfecting them. Always prefer disposable materials wherever possible.
7. Never hesitate to ask about the procedure, side-effects and the disinfection procedures.
8. Along with proper disinfection of the tools, operators should always wash their hands before working on a new client.
9. Public should avoid these procedures if suffering from communicable diseases e.g. fungal infections.
10. Read the labels for the composition of various cosmetic products.

11. Always try to avoid unnecessary procedures like artificial nails etc.

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