



二〇〇八年一月十五日

消委會關注靈芝產品孢子破壁率差異大

靈芝孢子產品真的如製造商聲稱那麼好？

產品製造商幾乎全部都就孢子的「破壁」程度作出聲稱，標榜「全破壁」並指療效更佳。

消費者委員會接獲消費者查詢靈芝孢子破壁的真確度，故此對該類售價不菲的產品進行測試。

所有 16 款靈芝孢子產品樣本都有破壁率的聲稱，例如「全破壁」、「雙倍全破壁」、「99.9%破壁」等。

從光學顯微鏡卻發現有樣本的真實情況與聲稱的相距甚遠。

16 個樣本當中，只有半數的破壁率在 90%以上，其中一個達到 100%，一個亦有相近的 99%。

其餘 8 個樣本的破壁率較低，最低的一個只有 5%破壁。

一個樣本介乎 10%至 20%，另一個為 50%。

現時並無法例或標準指定何謂「全破壁」。

消委會關注樣本的破壁率存在很大差異，因為越來越多宣傳以高破壁率為揀選靈芝孢子產品的重要考慮因素。

製造商聲稱，已破壁的靈芝孢子釋放更多的活性成分，故此比未破壁的更容易被服用者吸收。

但所有樣本都有類似的「破壁」聲稱，消費者其實無從分辨。

此外，其中 6 款樣本聲稱為「純靈芝孢子」產品，但事實並非如是。

在光學顯微鏡下，發現不少樣本含有其他物質，例如靈芝的菌絲、萌芽孢子及膠囊填充劑。但標籤上並沒有清楚列出這些成分。

有 5 個樣本含有維他命 E。個別廠商表示添加維他命 E 是防止氧化，但沒有一個樣本在標籤上註明。

測試亦檢視樣本膠囊的重量及內含物重量是否與標籤相符。一個樣本比聲稱的低超過 20%。

樣本亦包括 4 款含靈芝孢子油的產品。

其中一個樣本呈氧化，表示產品有變壞跡象。

消委會已將測試結果交予香港海關及衛生署跟進。

解構聲稱毋需手術的新美容療程

只須簡單的注射即可去皺美白，令人難以置信。

消費者委員會調查了日漸增加並聲稱為最新美容科技而毋需進行手術美容療程，它們可能會對公眾健康構成危險。

被宣傳推廣為創新的美容療法包括打點滴美白液注射、胎盤素，甚至二氧化碳。

這些療法是否有效？療程是否恰當進行及安全？風險為何？

鑒於種種疑問，消委會徵詢多個專業組織的意見，包括香港整形及整容外科醫學會、香港醫院藥劑師學會、香港中醫學會和專責公眾健康的衛生署。

他們一般都同意：沒有足夠科學證據顯示，用美白針、胎盤素和二氧化碳可以達致聲稱對皮膚的效果。

除了注射美容治療外，近年亦興起黃金線拉面。

黃金線拉面的程序是病人的面部先被局部麻醉，然後醫生用刺針和幼長的黃金線，在病人面頰以交錯形式穿入皮膚下形成網狀。聲稱黃金線可刺激皮膚更生，產生膠原蛋白，令皮膚緊緻。

去年一份整形醫學期刊報道，一名女士於在過去 10 年間做了 3 次黃金線拉面後，面頰出現劇痛。照 X 光後，從頭顱放射照片發現，植入的黃金線全部斷裂，全無方向，不能起固定皮膚的功效。

現時，藥劑產品及執業行醫分別由《藥劑業及毒藥條例》及《醫生註冊條例》規管，聲稱毋須手術的美容療程顯然不受上列條例規管。

很多國家都將皮膚填充物列為醫療儀器，現時本港衛生署對醫療儀器的規管屬自願性質，消委會促請政府加速推行醫療儀器的規管。

至於規管以注射進行的美容治療，若注射的物質並非藥劑產品，則沒有特定的法例規管注射情況或對進行注射人士的資歷要求。

衛生署認為區分醫學與美容治療有時並不容易，因此是否有觸犯法例，需要詳細考慮個別情況，未必能夠一下子便作出判斷。

該署補充，若注射的是藥劑產品，則該產品必須先根據《藥劑業及毒藥條例》註冊。在評核該註冊藥物時，有關產品的形態、用途和施用方法必須呈報。

《不良醫藥廣告條例》不容許發布導致他人為矯正畸形或外科整容而進行的手術廣告。不過，有關這些聲稱毋須手術、去皺和改善容貌的廣告可能未必直接抵觸有關條例，須詳細研究審視。

消費者要確保安全，必須尋求和清楚了解療程的資料，包括對身體的短期及長遠影響。決定進行治療前必須衡量所得的效益和涉及的風險，確保施行療程人士曾受適當訓練及有足夠經驗和技術去安全地做好療程，以及是否有其他療程可供考慮。

在本港，消委會在過去3年共接獲5宗關於上述提及美容治療的投訴，主要涉及後遺症，效果不滿意、誤導聲稱和銷售手法。

接受激光矯視手術前須知

你是否正考慮以激光矯視，希望從此與眼鏡說再見？

消費者委員會搜集了4間私家醫院和10間眼科或激光矯視中心的激光矯視手術資料，並向專家徵詢對這項目漸普及治療的意見。

現時的激光矯視手術，以「角膜切割激光矯視手術」最普遍，適用於治療近視、遠視和散光。

專家指出，所有手術都帶風險，可能出現併發症，但實際風險是因人而異。

激光矯視有不少成功個案，但亦不能保證消費者接受手術後可以完全不用配戴眼鏡，或可以得到完美視力。

故此應先詳細考慮手術的利弊才作決定。

調查發現該14間醫療機構都有提供有關手術涉及的風險、後遺症或副作用的資料，但詳盡程度差異頗大。

有些機構用較多篇幅列舉並解釋手術可能涉及的風險、併發症或副作用。部分則只簡單交代手術有機會出現併發症，建議向醫生查詢。

個別機構的宣傳單張沒有包括有關資料，但可安排預約中心提供的免費初步眼睛檢查和醫生諮詢服務。

消委會徵詢了香港中文大學眼科及視覺科學學系，和香港眼科醫學院的專家意見。

專家指出，激光矯視涉及的風險和副作用包括：角膜瓣問題（角膜瓣不規則、皺折

及脫落)、表皮內生、潰瘍、感染、圓錐角膜、眩光、鬼影及眼乾等。

不過專家大致都同意，大部分的後遺症都可以處理，對視力造成永久性傷害的風險很低。

患有以下情況或有以下疾病的人士一般不適直接受激光矯視手術，包括紅斑狼瘡、風濕關節炎、角膜炎、圓錐角膜、青光眼或明顯的白內障等。

他們應小心考慮，諮詢眼科醫生的意見，並詳細交代個人的健康狀況。

其他有關激光矯視的資料：

- 可矯正度數範圍視乎病人的角膜厚度，就適合的個案而言，一般來說最多可矯正近視 1,200 度、遠視和散光不超過 600 度。
- 深近視的人士要留意，激光矯視手術只會改變角膜的弧度，不能防止或減少因近視而較易患上白內障、青光眼或視網膜脫落的機會。
- 曾接受過激光矯視手術的病人，當有需要做白內障手術時會有一定程度的影響，這是由於人工晶體度數計算的方程式與未做過矯視手術的病人不同，人工晶體度數計算的準確度會明顯下降。

去年一月至十月期間，消委會共接獲 2 宗有關投訴，2006 年為 4 宗。主要涉及服務質素，銷售手法、價錢爭拗和手術效果欠佳，例如出現重影。

應選擇 VOC 含量低、水性及光澤度較低漆料

消費者計劃農曆新年前為居所粉飾一番的話，購買漆料時，應選擇符合法例就揮發性有機化合物含量的最新管制。

自 1 月 1 日起，《空氣污染管制（揮發性有機化合物）規例》有關管制 25 種漆料中的 VOC 含量的規定正式實施。

消費者委員會提醒消費者，室內空氣質素變壞，有可能是由於在裝修期間和完畢後，漆料、溶劑、黏合劑揮發出 VOC 所導致。

在正進行裝修工程時，感到刺眼、頭痛、頭暈、咳嗽或呼吸道不適等情況，非常普遍。

部分 VOC 已被證實或懷疑為致癌物質，可能嚴重影響健康。

要避免吸入 VOC，保障自己家人和環境的健康，消費者應選擇不含 VOC 或含量較低、水性和光澤度較低的漆料產品。

新規例下，供應商須在產品的物料安全資料、商品目錄、產品容器或包裝等其中一

個媒體，標示 VOC 的資料。

資料須包括產品中 VOC 的含量，如在使用前須以有機溶劑或天拿水稀釋，則須提供按有關產品上建議的稀釋比例，計算稀釋後的 VOC 含量。

此外，消費者要留意，市場可能有部分在售的漆料產品在 VOC 限值規例生效前已入口，而其 VOC 含量超過規定的上限。

為方便消費者辨別，未合乎規定的漆料產品須在包裝上貼出指定標籤說明：「本產品的揮發性有機化合物含量，超逾將於 2008 年 1 月 1 日實施的訂明限制。揮發性有機化合物引致空氣污染。」

消費者應留意產品的 VOC 含量資料，即使有減價推廣，也應避免使用 VOC 含量高的產品。

其他注意事項：

- 選擇漆料的顏色和功能之餘，應比較不同品牌和系列的 VOC 含量，最好選用 VOC 含量較低的產品。
- 購買漆料前小心計算使用量，避免購買過量，造成浪費。剩餘的須妥善儲置。
- 施工期間和完成工程後，均要保持室內空氣流通。

留意可疑「旅遊渡假計劃」

消費者對旅遊渡假計劃的不良銷售手法應提高警覺。

消費者委員會近期接獲不少與海外分用渡假屋計劃相似的不良銷售手法投訴。

但這次推銷的不是分用渡假屋，而是售賣旅遊計劃。

最常見的情況是，投訴人收到電話，通知因完成最近的電話調查而獲贈送旅遊贈券，並可免費參加旅遊講座。

投訴人出席講座時立即被游說參加該公司推廣的旅遊渡假計劃。

參加辦法有二：第一是一次過繳 7 萬元加入成為會員，以後每兩年在其特約的海外渡假村享受為期 7 天的旅遊假期。

或者是分期付款以現金、銀行戶口轉帳或信用卡繳付總數約 9 萬元的會費，便可在 30 年內，每年享用 7 天海外渡假村旅遊假期。

投訴人表示不參加，但公司職員仍極力游說和疲勞式轟炸。

為求脫身，投訴人相信職員聲稱他並不符合入會資格，以為只是循例遞交申請計劃

即可離開。結果支付了\$1,200 訂金，在協議上簽名同意以 15 年為期，每月供款\$500。

但投訴人後來竟然收到該公司通知已接受其申請。經過了多番調解後，投訴人只好放棄訂金，與該公司協議正式解約。

消費者要留意這類先以一般市場調查，再以電話通知獲獎的手法。

一旦被對方「誘導」出席講座，便會有可能被不斷游說和疲勞轟炸而參加昂貴的計劃。

《選擇》月刊現已上網，網址為<http://choice.yp.com.hk>，同時可透過電訊盈科固網及流動電話服務接收。

今日（一月十五日）《選擇》月刊記者招待會主持為消委會宣傳及社區關係小組主席何沛謙先生。

歡迎被邀出席新聞發布會的傳媒引用新聞稿的內容。

消費者委員會保留所有關於《選擇》月刊及網上《選擇》的權利（包括版權）。



**Council concerned over wide variances
in spore breakage rate of lingzhi products**

Are products of lingzhi spores (靈芝孢子) as good as their manufacturers' claim?

One claim seemingly universal among the manufacturers is the assertion over the breakage rate of the spores - that each and every spore and its wall are fully broken or cracked open purportedly to maximize the efficacy of the product.

The Consumer Council has conducted a laboratory test in response to enquiries about its authenticity from consumers able to pay dearly to purchase this legendary Chinese elixir of life.

Without exception, all 16 lingzhi spore samples under investigation bore similarly claims of “fully wall-broken”, or “breakage rate of 99%” or the like.

Under the powerful magnification of light microscope, the ultra fine lingzhi spores contained in the capsules revealed, however, in not a few cases, quite a drastically different picture.

Of the 16 samples, only half (8) were able to achieve over 90% in the spore breakage rate.

Among these high score samples, one sample actually attained a total 100% while another a close 99%.

Of the 8 remainders, on the lower end of the scale, the worst performer had a breakage rate of the spores as low as only 5%.

One sample was detected with between 10% and 20% while another with 50%.

Currently there is no law or standard on what constitutes “fully wall-broken”.

The Consumer Council is concerned over the wide variances found in the spore breakage rate of these products.

Increasingly, spore breakage rate is promoted as an important factor in selecting lingzhi spore products.

Manufacturers are claiming that the active ingredients are more readily released from broken spores than non-broken ones and, therefore, more easily absorbed by consumers in taking them.

Consumers, however, are at a loss to differentiate the products all bearing similar claim on the spore breakage rate.

In addition, 6 of the samples were claimed to be “pure” lingzhi spore products but this turned out not to be the case.

Under light microscope, many of the 16 samples were found to contain more than just the spores but also other materials, like hyphae, germlings and filling materials. But these ingredients were often not disclosed for the information of consumers.

Further, vitamin E was found present in 5 of the samples. According to the manufacturers, the vitamin was added to act as a preservative. However, none of the samples concerned were labelled with vitamin E on their ingredient list.

The samples were also checked for the accuracy in the labelling of their capsule weight and content weight. One sample was found to be much lower, by over 20%, than the weight claimed.

Besides the 16 lingzhi spore samples, the test included 4 models of lingzhi spore oil products.

One of the samples was found to be spoiled, i.e. the oil was oxidized.

The Consumer Council has notified both the Customs and Excise Department and the Department of Health of the overall test findings.

Council debunks myths of self-claimed “non-surgical cosmetic treatments”

If wrinkle removal and skin whitening by the simple act of injections sound too good to be true, you cannot be more correct.

The Consumer Council has surveyed a rapidly emerging market touting consumers with what it claims to be the latest in new cosmetic technology – so-called “non-surgical cosmetic treatment” that could actually impose health risks to the public.

The “innovative” treatments being marketed includes whitening drips, injection of placenta extract and even carbon dioxide.

But how effective are such treatments? Can they be delivered competently? What are the risks?

In light of the above and other concerns of various stakeholders, the Consumer Council has sought the views of professional bodies – the Hong Kong Society of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine as well as the public health authority – Department of Health.

One general consensus that emerged clearly is: there is scant scientific evidence to support the use of whitening drips, placenta extract and carbon dioxide for their claimed effects on the skin.

Besides injection form of cosmetic treatments, there is also another presentation known as gold thread facelift.

For this latter form of treatment, the patient will need a local anesthetic, after which a tube will be inserted into the face for the subsequent threading of a golden web into the skin and/or deeper underlying tissues. It is claimed that the golden thread can trigger body reaction so that collagen will coat the thread and thus the achievement of a fuller skin tone and increased elasticity.

Last year, a medical journal Aesthetic Plastic Surgery reported on a patient who developed facial pain after she had undergone three so-called gold thread lift suspension procedures within 10 years. Skull radiographs revealed complete fragmentation of all the implants and a total loss of their vector orientation.

At present, pharmaceutical products and medical practice are governed by the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance and Medical Registration Ordinance respectively. Apparently, the self-claimed “non-surgical cosmetic treatments” fall outside the jurisdiction of the above laws.

As dermal fillers are classified as medical devices in many other countries, the Government is urged to speed up the regulation of medical devices in Hong Kong. At present, such products are subject to voluntary administrative control by Department of Health.

As regards regulatory measures on cosmetic treatment by injection, if the substance to be injected is not a pharmaceutical product, there is no specific legal requirement on the conditions of injection or qualification of the person giving it.

The Department of Health considered that since the differentiation between medical and cosmetic therapy can be difficult and may have to be

judged on a case by case basis, whether there has been legal contravention may not be easy to tell at the outset of any incident.

The Department remarked that if a pharmaceutical product is involved, it must first be registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board according to the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance. During the registration assessment, a product's form for its indicated use(s) which route(s) must be declared.

In that connection, the Undesirable Medical Advertisements Ordinance prohibits the advertising of any treatment for the correction of deformity or the surgical alteration of a person's appearance. Nevertheless, advertisements on wrinkle removal or improvement to appearance through the so-called non-surgical means may not be straight forward offenders and will require careful scrutiny.

On the part of the consumers, they are always advised to study the details of the treatments carefully, including evidence for claimed benefits and short and long term undesirable effects. Always weigh the benefits and the risks. Also, make sure that the persons offering the service are adequately trained and sufficiently experienced. Available options must also be considered before coming to a final decision.

The Consumer Council received a total of five complaints related to cosmetic treatment cited above over the past three years. The complaints were largely about side-effects, unsatisfactory results, misleading claims or sales practice.

Everything you need to find out about LASIK before bidding farewell to your spectacles

Out go the eyeglasses, and in comes the LASIK (Laser Assisted in Situ Keratomileusis) surgery. Is this the vision correction that you have long been contemplating?

To assist consumers, the Consumer Council has surveyed the market for LASIK surgery service at 4 private hospitals and 10 eye surgery clinics, and sought expert advice on this increasingly popular treatment.

LASIK is presently the most commonly performed refractive eye surgery to correct myopia, hyperopia and astigmatism.

In the view of the experts, no surgical procedure is totally risk free; complications may arise and the actual risk may differ from individual to individual.

Although there have been highly successful cases, there is no

guarantee that consumers after receiving LASIK surgery will be completely free of eyeglasses or result in perfect vision.

So, keep your glasses on and weigh very carefully the pros and cons of such eye treatment.

By and large, the survey found these 14 service providers to offer quite a wide range of information covering potential risks or complications, and varying in content and level of details.

Some provide comprehensive content listing out the potential risks in detail; but a few only briefly note the possibility of complications that may arise, and the need to consult doctors beforehand.

Where potential risks and complications are not covered in printed promotional leaflets, some service providers may offer free-of-charge preliminary eye assessment and medical consultation to potential clients.

The Council has sought the expert opinions of the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the College of Ophthalmologists of Hong Kong.

According to the experts, the risks and possible side-effects of LASIK surgery include: flap-related complications (irregular flap, wrinkles or folds), epithelial in-growth, corneal ulcer, infection, cone-shaped cornea, halo, double vision and dry eye, etc.

In general, the experts agreed that most LASIK complications can be managed and the risk of serious and permanent damage is low accordingly.

In particular, LASIK is in general not recommended for patients with lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis, or those with keratitis, dacryocystitis, cone-shaped cornea, glaucoma, or progressive cataract, etc.

They are advised to consider carefully, and discuss their medical history with ophthalmologists.

Other highlights of interest include:

- The maximum LASIK treatment range depends on many factors including whether the patients have enough corneal tissue for ablation. In suitable cases, myopia can be treated up to about 1200 degrees (100 degrees = 1 dioptre), hyperopia and astigmatism, each to about 600 degrees.
- People with serious myopia should be wary that LASIK surgery only changes the shape of the cornea; it could not prevent or stop those myopia-associated diseases such as retinal degeneration and

detachment, cataract and chronic glaucoma, etc.

- LASIK and other corneal vision correction procedures will affect the subsequent cataract surgery because calculation of the intraocular lens power requires a different formula and the overall accuracy is reduced.

Between January and October 2007, the Consumer Council received 2 complaint cases compared with 4 cases in 2006. They usually relate to sale tactics, price dispute, service quality and undesirable refractive outcome e.g. double vision.

Choose paints of lower VOC content, water-based and less glossy to safeguard health and environment

Consumers giving their home a new coat of paint to usher in the new year, are strongly urged to choose only paints in compliance of the new legal requirement on volatile organic compounds (VOC).

Regulation on the VOC content of 25 types of architectural paints/coatings with limits set under the Air Pollution Control (Volatile Organic Compounds) Regulations came into force effective January 1.

In the January issue of CHOICE, the Consumer Council has drawn the attention of consumers to a common cause of deteriorated indoor air quality due to the generation of VOC from paints, solvents, adhesives, etc. during and after renovation.

It is common, where renovation is in progress, to experience eye irritation, headache, dizziness, cough, nose and throat irritations.

Some of the VOC are known to be carcinogenic or probably carcinogenic and, therefore, are detrimental to health.

To reduce exposure to VOC, and to safeguard health and environment, consumers owe it to themselves to support and choose paints with lower VOC content and those that are water-based, and less glossy.

Under the new legislation, suppliers of paints are required to indicate, inter-alia, the VOC content of the products on either the material safety data sheet, product catalogue, container or packaging.

The information should state the VOC content in the form in which it is supplied in compliance of the prescribed limit. And if dilution with organic solvents or thinners is necessary before application, the VOC content after dilution as calculated on the basis of the dilution ratio recommended on the

product should be stated.

Consumers should, however, be wary that paints imported before the date of VOC limits became effective, and still available in the market, may contain a higher VOC content in excess of the statutory limits.

For ease of differentiation by consumers of such non-compliant paints, the products are required to bear the label: "The content of volatile organic compounds in this product exceeds the prescribed limit that is to be implemented with effect from 1 January 2008. Volatile organic compounds cause air pollution".

In this connection, consumers are urged to pay heed to the product information on VOC, and avoid using products with high VOC content even if there is special promotion or discount offer for these products.

Other tips to heed:

- Aside from selection of colour and function, always compare the VOC content of different brands and series so as to choose a product with lower VOC content.
- Estimate the amount of usage prior to purchase so as to prevent unnecessary wastage. And store or dispose of unused paints in a proper way.
- Keep good ventilation during and after renovation.

Beware of dubious holiday travel schemes

Consumers are warned to be wary of the malpractices of dubious holiday travel schemes.

The Consumer Council has recently received complaints that are very similar to those leveled against time-sharing schemes.

But instead of time-sharing of holiday home or resort hotel accommodation, the new tactic is to sell holiday travel schemes.

In a typical case, a complainant got called up one day that a prize was ready for his collection in appreciation of his help in responding to a recent telephone survey, and that a free seminar on travel would also be provided.

He duly showed up at the company office, but was quickly persuaded to join a holiday travel scheme being promoted by the company.

Two options were offered: First, pay in one lump sum of \$70,000 to become a scheme member, and henceforth enjoy a 7-day holiday travel at designated overseas resorts once every two years.

Second, pay on monthly instalment, with cash or bank account transfer or credit card, a total sum of \$90,000 as membership fee, and henceforth a 7-day holiday travel once every year in the next 30 years.

The complainant declined but the persuasion and bombardment went on relentlessly.

Exhausted and desperate to leave, he finally backed down - signed and paid a deposit of \$1,200 for the purpose of applying to join a scheme of 15-year duration, by monthly instalment of \$500, on the belief that he was not qualified (according to the staff), and his application would be rejected anyway.

Later, he received a notification of the company informing him that his application had already been accepted. After much negotiation, the complainant had to forfeit the deposit in order to rescind the agreement that he had signed with the company.

Consumers are advised to be on guard for these sale practices that usually begin with a seemingly normal market survey to be followed by a surprise telephone call informing you that you are the lucky recipient of a free prize.

Once entrapped, you will be subjected to grueling sale persuasion to join the scheme at no small cost.

CHOICE magazine is now also available online (at <http://choice.yip.com.hk>) and via fixed-line and mobile services of PCCW.

Chairing the press conference today (January 15) on the publication of CHOICE issue number 375 is Mr. Ambrose HO, Chairman of Publicity and Community Relations Committee of the Consumer Council.

Members from the media who are invited by this Council to the Press Conference may quote the content of this Press Statement.

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