

LETTER

# Shifting dermatology market strategies from cosmetics to moisturizers and sanitizers treatments in COVID-19 era

Dear Editor,

Given their easy accessibility and the change in the general population's perspective when it comes to self-care and hygiene, there has been a major interest in cosmeceuticals. This has led to a boom in the market, with an interest in sun protection, depigmentation agents, and anti-ageing creams. This momentum has seen a sudden halt in 2020, with the new corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic raging across the world, where there has been a dramatic decrease in interest personal self-care products.<sup>1-3</sup> This has been attributed to possible uncertainty of the coming future outlook, in addition to financial constraints.<sup>4-6</sup> Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought tremendous changes in the marketing strategies of pharma companies.

Hand hygiene is extremely important to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. It also interrupts transmission of other viruses and bacteria causing common colds, flu, and pneumonia, thus reducing the general burden of disease.<sup>1,7</sup> Frequent handwashing and the use of disinfectants/sanitizers has been proven to decrease the viral load. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have recommended that handwashing with soap is a better method compared to the use of a sanitizer. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol can be utilized to eliminate the virus, but they are not as effective as soap water at removing all visible dirt and all germ types.<sup>8</sup> However, sanitizers can be used when handwashing is unavailable. To meet the current demand, the CDC has now recommending all pharmacies keep sufficient hand sanitizers available on each counter top for use by customers and health care workers.<sup>9</sup> Frequent handwashing with soap, detergents, and disinfectants not only removes germs, harmful chemicals, and dirt, but also the natural, hydrolipid mantle of skin. This can lead to excessive dryness, fissuring, and also development of contact dermatitis.<sup>10</sup> In patients with preexisting hand eczema or palmar psoriasis who already have a defect in epidermal barrier function, dry cracked skin or excessive dryness due to frequent handwashing can deepen any fissure if present, which not only make them prone to secondary infection, but also can lead to functional disability. Hence frequent use of a moisturizer after handwashing is recommended to prevent cutaneous dryness.

Due to the quarantine because of the COVID-19 pandemic, most people are staying and working from home. Accordingly, their demand has shifted from cosmetic and hair care products to skin care products like soap, moisturizers, and sanitizers/disinfectants. Hence after evaluating the current demands, many pharma industries have

shifted their focus to skin care products like soap, moisturizers, and sanitizers.

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We confirm that the manuscript has been read and approved by all the authors, that the requirements for authorship as stated earlier in this document have been met, and that each author believes that the manuscript represents honest work.

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Robert A. Schwartz: Conceptualization, data curation, writing—original draft. Swetalina Pradhan: Investigation, writing—review and editing. Hassan Galadari: Investigation, writing—original draft, writing—review and editing. Torello Lotti: Methodology, supervision, writing—review and editing. Aseem Sharma: Supervision, writing—review and editing. Mohamad Goldust: Conceptualization, data curation, writing—original draft.

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