

Blek is beautiful

During the spring and summer most of us use lots of time working on our tan. We spend hundreds of kroner on sunscreens. Every summer we flee the country and visit Greece, Spain or Turkey struggling to get a bronze tan.

However, this does not apply to everyone. White Rose in Oslo is a clinique where you can go to get a skin bleach. The customers come once a month for a new treatment. Most of them are from Pakistan. In their home country they use a bleach powder just as strong as chlorine. It burns and hurts and damages your skin. Skin bleaching is big business all over the world, especially in Brazil, China, India, Pakistan, Japan and USA. Bleaching products account for more than 10 per cent of all cosmetics sold in Asia and 40 per cent of all cosmetics sold in India.

In Africa they use chlorine mixed with sand and lye(lut). Other places in the world the skin is treated with a mixture of dish soap, mercury(kvikksølv), cortisone or hydrokinon. Hydrokinon is a strong bleaching product and you need a prescription to use it in Europe. It might lead to cancer, liver damage and osteoporosis.

In Norway they use a mixture of moisturizer, serum, toner and a peeling powder. In addition to this they use a liquid called goldwell topchic developer lotion which contains 6 per cent of hydrogen peroxide. Hydrogen peroxide is a product actually meant for hair bleaching and is extremely dangerous for the skin.

In many counties men are encouraged by their mothers and grand-mothers to find a wife with as pale skin as possible. That is part of the reason why skin bleaching is very common also among Pakistani women in Norway. Other reasons are that pale skin is generally considered to be beautiful and some do it to avoid racism.

As long as white skin is the ideal the beauty industry will continue to make lots of money and skin bleaching will continue. Even influential people like Oprah Winfrey or Barack Obama can reverse this trend back to "black is beautiful".