

# The Concept of Further Training for Safety Assessors

Interview with **Birgit Huber**,

Chair “Exposure of cosmetic products/percutaneous penetration”, **DGK/IKW**



Birgit Huber ©IKW

Safety assessors fulfill an important task. They evaluate cosmetic products with regard to their safety for human health before the products are placed on the market. Safety assessors are responsible for ensuring that the product meets all legal requirements with regard to safety to human health under intended and reasonably foreseeable use conditions.

The principle of safety assessment of cosmetic products applies throughout the EU. Accordingly the EU has

taken on a pioneering role internationally. The principle of safety assessment was first established in European cosmetics legislation in 1993 with Directive 93/35/EEC. Since then, manufacturers or distributors of cosmetics have been obliged to subject every product to a comprehensive assessment before placing it on the market to ensure its safety for human health.

As the tasks of safety assessors are very demanding, DGK e. V. (German Society for Scientific and Applied Cosmetics) and IKW (German Cosmetic, Toiletry, Perfumery and Detergent Association), in cooperation with experts from universities, authorities and industry, have been offering special training courses for safety assessors since 1998.

The training concept currently consists of seven training courses or online training sessions and a supplementary range of seminars which take place in person. Two new modules will soon be added to the course program, covering the topics of “Non-Animal Methods (NAMs)” and the environmental assessment of cosmetic products.

There are now a number of collaborations worldwide that take up the DGK and IKW training concept. All details can be found at [www.sicherheitsbewerter.info](http://www.sicherheitsbewerter.info) and [www.safetyassessor.info](http://www.safetyassessor.info).

In this and the next issues of the SOFW Journal, we will introduce you to the individual courses and the course leaders.

**Ms. Birgit Huber is chair of the course “Exposure of cosmetic products/percutaneous penetration”. How long have you been running the course?**

I was involved in the development of the course system right from the beginning. Since 1993, it was a legal requirement that a safety assessment had to be carried out for every product. This raised the question of who could carry out such an assessment. After all, the mere fact that someone has studied medicine or pharmacy is not enough to carry out such a safety assessment responsibly. Together with scientists, authorities and industry experts, we have therefore discussed very intensively what qualifications and information a safety assessor should have in order to carry out such an assessment. Of course, safety assessors do not need to commission mutagenicity studies themselves. They will receive such data from the raw material manufacturers. But they should have an idea about what tests are available and how their results can be interpreted.

Considering the relevant knowledge a safety assessor needs we developed a holistic concept for our trainings, dividing the program into separate courses covering different subjects. We recommend that safety assessors should have completed the training program at least once in their professional career. However, there are always new findings, such as the approach to safety using alternative methods since the ban on animal testing. Such developments have to be taken into account in the daily work of a safety assessor. So the courses are updated regularly. We are particularly pleased that the German authorities responsible for inspecting cosmetic products also attend the trainings. They are therefore familiar with the training concept and have therefore dealt intensively with the safety assessments.



Event Petersberg 2023 © Jacquemat Jennifer

I myself only took over the management of the exposure course in 2008. In 2023, we celebrated the **25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the training courses** with a high-caliber scientific symposium.

#### How has the concept of the training courses developed?

We are constantly revising the range of available trainings to keep safety assessors up to date with the latest scientific and legislative developments. This is why we have also added a range of seminars and practical exercises to our training concept, which always explain current topics. This range of seminars is also offered in many other countries to give participants from all over the world the opportunity to continue their training. I am overwhelmed by the great interest in the courses and we are delighted that the concept is also being accepted in many other countries.

#### What is the essential content of the course and why is this knowledge important for safety assessors?

The “Exposure and Percutaneous Penetration” course is one of the courses that is very practical. Many things are crucial when

assessing a substance. For example, it is important to consider whether the substance passes through the skin and in what concentrations it is applied. The frequency of application is also important and who the users are, for example children or adults. When choosing the speakers, it is of major importance to ensure that the presentations are very practical.

#### Do you have a particular experience from your course that you would like to share?

The exchange with and the mix of participants is always inspiring. Some participants are attending the course for the first time and for others it is their last one. In this respect, the contact with each other is very important and stimulating. However, as many courses can now be booked as web training, the personal exchange often has to take place elsewhere, e.g. as part of the seminars, which are also offered regularly.

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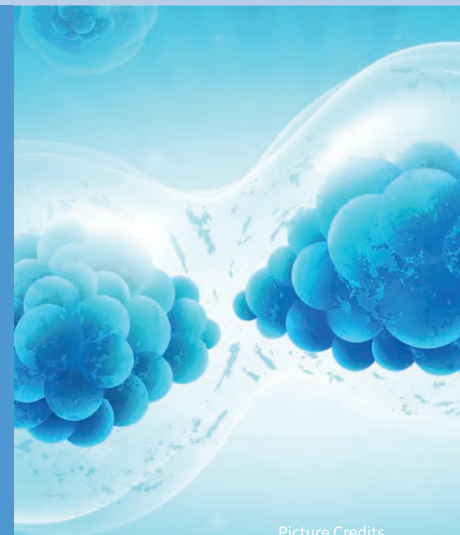
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