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Qualitative and quantitative composition of essential oils: A literature-based database on contact allergens used for safety assessment

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Abstract

The risks related to the use of essential oils are difficult to ascertain at present, due in part to the large number of different oils available on the market, making it difficult for the risk assessor. Essential oils may contain skin allergens in significant amounts, and could thus pose a risk to the consumer. The aim of our study was to collect as much qualitative and quantitative data as possible on allergens present in essential oils. 11 types of essential oils, with 25 respective subspecies, were taken into account based on a previous survey. Based on the literature, 517 dosages were recorded from 112 publications, providing precious information for probabilistic exposure assessment purposes. 22 substances recognized as established allergens were found in the essential oils we included. Of these, 11 are also found in cosmetics as fragrance components. These results are of major importance regarding co-exposure to fragrance allergens. Moreover, this could lead to regulatory measures for essential oils in the future, as it is the case for cosmetic products, in order to better protect consumers against skin allergy.

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