

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The “Salon Safety Quiz” for pre-/post-evaluation assessment when training young cosmetology workers in public secondary schools

Abstract. A Salon Safety Quiz (SSQ) was developed in 2012 by New Jersey Safe Schools (NJSS) Program in conjunction with Georgia Tech Research Institute. The SSQ is intended to be a teaching tool and a starting point for discussion between cosmetology teachers and their students concerning health risks and hazards faced by salon workers. “Young Worker Safety and Health Training for the Cosmetology Industry” trainings conducted in both New Jersey (NJ) and Georgia (GA) utilized the SSQ as a pre-/post-assessment tool to gauge baseline knowledge on safety and health topics, as well as knowledge gained after trainings. Topics covered in the trainings include child labor laws and safety and health hazards for salon workers focusing on chemical safety and ergonomics. Pre- and post-aggregate data between April and September 2013 were analyzed for NJ and GA. There was a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-mean scores for both NJ ($p < 0.001$) and GA ($p = 0.004$), and for mean post-test scores between NJ and GA ($p < 0.001$). There was also a statistically significant difference between mean scores for both states between pre- and post-test scores for both 9th and 10th graders and 11th and 12th graders. Students in both states particularly had issues with identifying biological hazards, knowledge of the correct placement of fire extinguishers, how to prevent tripping hazards, and knowledge of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s hazard communication standard and top cited salon offenses. Results can help guide objectives, specific sub-topics, and new activities for students in future young cosmetology worker trainings.

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INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Safe Schools Program (NJSS) at the Center for School and Community-Based Research and Education at the Rutgers, The State

University of New Jersey, School of Public Health seeks to assist schools in reducing risk to occupational safety and health (S&H) hazards in secondary school and work microenvironments in which New Jersey (NJ)

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Table 1. Locations and numbers of secondary school students (with 1-2 teachers present) for an in-classroom cosmetology training who completed the Salon Safety Quiz in 2013.

State	County (city)	Date	Session number	Number of students at training	Pre-test completed ^b	Post-test completed
Georgia ^a	Douglas (Lithia Springs)	March, 2012	1	17	58	52
	Douglas (Lithia Springs)	March, 2012	2	18		
	Douglas (Lithia Springs)	March, 2012	3	9		
	Douglas (Lithia Springs)	September, 2013	1	14		
	Hall (Gainsville)	March, 2012	1	12	11	11
	Haralson (Tallapoosa)	March, 2012	1	25	48	50
	Haralson (Tallapoosa)	March, 2012	2	25		
Total completed				120	117	113
New Jersey	Gloucester (Sewell)	April, 2013	1	40	80	80
	Gloucester (Sewell)	April, 2013	2	46		
	Morris (Denville)	June, 2013	1	48	80	70
	Morris (Denville)	June, 2013	2	41		
Total completed				175	160	150

^a Note some of the numbers do not match up between pre- and post-test if students arrived late to class, leave class early, or refused to participate.

^b Initial use of Salon Safety Quiz, after 2012 beta-testing and pilot test (a GA sample), was only pre-training/teacher discussion (GA: $n = 50$, NJ: $n = 232$).

adolescents spend time. In 2010, NJSS developed a task force to explore relevant S&H topics related to the cosmetology field, including hair styling, barbering, nail care, and skin care as well as technical and educational roles. One of the products produced through the NJSS Cosmetology Task Force, conducted over three years from 2010 to 2012, was the 25 question Salon Safety Quiz (SSQ).¹ NJSS developed this quiz in collaboration with the Center for Young Worker Safety and Health, Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI). The original intent of this quiz was to highlight important S&H knowledge and awareness information pertaining to cosmetology students prior to their two-part licensing exam (theory, practical). The objective of this quiz was to be a fun and educational teaching tool and a starting point for discussions between cosmetology teachers and their students about the S&H risks young adults may face when working in salons. Question types include true/false, yes/no and multiple choice formats; some questions include a 'specify' or 'other' option. The students sum their overall score based on the number of questions answered correctly to identify their "Salon Safety Aptitude" expressed by phrases matched with score ranges.

NJSS, starting in 2013, has also provided an in-service topical training to cosmetology students and their teachers with an overview of child labor laws, S&H hazards for salon workers, discussions of how salon workers can control those S&H hazards with a focus on chemical safety and ergonomics, and inclusion of activities. The SSQ has been distributed before each training session begins, as a way to assess baseline knowledge of salon safety, and then delivered again post training, about 2–2.5 hours later, as a way to assess immediate knowledge gained.

Results presented in this paper about the SSQ represent training sessions conducted in both NJ and in metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia (GA), using similar content but different trainers, between March and September, 2013 (Table 1). These analyses documented the potential for the SSQ to be a pre-/post-training evaluation assessment tool for use in public secondary schools offering cosmetology programs.

BACKGROUND

Career and technical education in the cosmetology field offers a unique opportunity for high school students to

get a jump start in a growing field.^{2–5} Cosmetology career possibilities include aestheticians for skin care, manicurist and pedicurist for nails, hair dressers/stylists and barbers; however, there are associated S&H risks associated with each of these subgroups.⁶ Not being aware of these S&H issues placed these workers at a greater risk when entering the work force.^{7,8} Results from exposures in the cosmetology field included occupational allergy symptoms and eye irritation from chemicals used in salons.⁹ Occupational allergy symptoms are a result of chemical inhalation and poor ventilation cosmetologists may be exposed to on a daily basis.⁹ One Finnish study, for example, reported hairdressers were 3.5 times more likely to leave the field due to asthma related illness.¹⁰ Most risks cosmetologists face, however, are due in part by a combination of lack of S&H knowledge and underuse of personal protective equipment (PPE). Cosmetologists are also at a greater risk of acquiring injuries due to strain from repetitive motion. This, combined with prolonged standing and bending over, is responsible for excessive musculoskeletal related injuries,^{11,12} such as neck, shoulder, lower back, elbow and wrist strain injuries.

As a result, the NJSS SSQ focused on chemical safety including relevant PPE

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