

Scientific Study

Fragrance Impairs Brain Function

**“Air
fresheners
impair
brain function
by
reducing
task
performance
accuracy.”**



Something stinks! The fragrance industry has been marketing scents pumped into the air handling systems of hotels, offices, and businesses with the claim that certain smells improve branding, keep customers in stores longer so they buy more, and increase worker productivity.

Cornell University researchers Gaygen and Hedge decided to put this claim to the test and discovered that the fragrances in air fresheners impair brain function by reducing task performance accuracy.

When fragrance was introduced into an office setting, it significantly decreased the accuracy of the worker's low-frequency word recognition and reaction times.

Gaygen and Hedge say the presence of fragrance serves as a distraction that impairs lexical task performance accuracy. “The introduction of fragrances into buildings may not necessarily facilitate all aspects of work performance as anticipated.”

While most people enjoy scents and remember good times and loved ones by certain fragrances, modern day perfumes, colognes, and air fresheners contain 3,000–5,000 chemicals, 95% of which are derived from petroleum, and 80% of which have not been tested for human safety.

The perfume industry is not regulated by any government agency. It is entirely self-regulated. Ingredient lists are protected by law, so anything can be put into a fragrance without truthful labeling. In fact, tests have shown many

of the chemicals in fragrances are also found in gasoline and in cigarette smoke. Some of these carcinogens are listed on the EPA list as being unsafe in even the smallest exposure amount.

While the unscrupulous fragrance industry works to increase sales by convincing unsuspecting hotels and businesses that scents increase customer satisfaction and worker productivity, and even encourages more customers to buy and return, the truth of the matter is that fragrance is harmful to the health of the American people.

In fact, as much as 1/3rd of the population experience debilitating negative health effects from fragrances which lead to asthma, allergies, and multiple chemical sensitivity. These would-be customers actively avoid entering a store, hotel, or office which is fragranced, causing a loss - not gain - of business and productivity... and with good reason. Fragrances have been shown to impair brain function.

Fragrances are personal and should be used and applied as such. The air is shared by everyone and, thus, should be free of fragrances as it is free of cigarette smoke and other toxic substances.

“When you choose to use fragrances, chemicals, or pesticides, you are not simply making a choice for yourself, you are making a choice for everyone around you.” © MCS America

Reference

Gaygen DE, Hedge A. Effect of Acute Exposure to a Complex Fragrance on Lexical Decision Performance. *Chem Senses*. 2008 Oct 1. [Epub ahead of print]