

Lip Balms AWAY!

CWSF 2005 Project ID 010124

Abstract:

The purpose of this project was to determine which brand of 'regular' lip balm was the best based on; Medical Benefits, Usage Qualities and Lack of Negative Health Issues. In summary, most of the categories were determined by the amount of 'wet' feel they created. The oil based products had a great advantage because of this. My recommendation is to stay away from 'regular' lip balms as they give a false sense of security (no healing, protection etc.).

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Introduction & Purpose:

Lip balms are used by many people around the world. So what makes people use some lip balms instead of others? It was my fascination for lip balm that intrigued me to discover this for myself. While doing research for my project topic I was faced with the unheard of; 'was lip balm actually good for lips or was it a waste of money for the regular user?'

The purpose of this experiment was to determine which brand of lip balm was the best based on; Medical Benefits (sun protection & healing properties), Usage Qualities (i.e. durability-abrasion resistance), and Lack of Health Issues (addiction properties). The scope of this project was limited to 'regular' lip balms, focusing on the four top selling brands available.

Hypothesis:

It is hypothesized that wax based lip balms will perform better as they are a 'natural' product, and not a petroleum based product.

Durability Test: In the Durability test the heavier wax based products will have the most 'stick' and will place the highest in the rankings.

Ultra Violet Test: I predict that the Ultra Violet test will be won by the only product with SPF protection (Blistex), and the others will be very similar in low, end results.

Healing Properties: I predict that the natural wax based products (Lypsyl) will do better as they contain no petroleum based ingredients. Petroleum is a skin irritant.

Negative Health Issues: I predict that the oil based products will be ranked poorly in this category as they are smoother to the touch and generally moister. This would greatly contribute to the results of the addictiveness ranking.

Design/ Method:

In defining which brand of lip balm works the best, three of the five major categories were chosen;

1. Medical Benefits;
 - a. UV proofing abilities. This was done through experimentation.
 - b. Healing Properties. A study was performed to categorize the brands into one of four levels.
2. Negative Health Issues;
 - a. A study of addictive vs. habit forming properties.
3. Usage Qualities;
 - a. Durability against abrasion. This was done through experimentation.

The performance of the four brands under examination: Blistex-Regular, Lypsyl-Regular, Labello and Life Essentials were then scored using a weighted dimension.

Materials:

- Ray Ultraviolet Meter Model #J221 long wave UV meter
- Cotton Swabs
- Glass Pane
- Digital Camera
- Ruler
- Weight
- Blistex Regular
- Regular Flavored Lypsyl
- Regular Labello
- Life Essentials Lip Balm

Observations:

	Durability			Negative Health Issues			UV Protection			Healing Properties			Total
	Weight	Score (10)	Wt*Score	Weight	Score (10)	Wt*Score	Weight	Score (10)	Wt*Score	Weight	Score (10)	Wt*Score	
Blistex Regular	5	2.1	10.5	10	6.5	65	9	1.4	12.6	4	4	16	104.1
Lypsyl Regular Flavoured	5	0.5	2.5	10	7	70	9	0.5	4.5	4	3	12	89
Labello Regular	5	0.7	3.5	10	6	60	9	0.2	1.8	4	5	20	85.3
Life Essentials Lip Balm	5	5.9	29.5	10	5.5	55	9	0.4	3.6	4	6	24	112.1

Detailed Observations

- To see observations for experiments/study results please see the graphs.
- Life Essentials Lip balm scored the highest at 112 points out of a possible 280.

General Observations:

- The Ingredients listed on the Blistex product were listed in alphabetical order as oppose to order of quantity. Why might this be...?
- Blistex also only listed the active ingredients on the package. To find the full list of ingredients an internet search had to be made.
- The brand Lypsyl did not anywhere (even on website), list ingredients!
- For all the brands of lip balms there were no healing ingredients listed in the 'active ingredient section.'

Interpretations:

- The two petrolatum based products (Life Essentials and Blistex), scored higher than the two wax based products (Labello and Lypsyl)
- In the Healing Properties category none of the products had any active ingredients listed for healing. There score was largely determined by how they felt; creating a false image of healing.
- None of the brands qualified for being harmful to the lips and therefore the addictiveness was also determined by the feel (which would increase habitual use).
- Errors may possibly have occurred in the durability experiment where oil based lip balms were absorbed into the cotton swab, therefore shortening the drag length.
- In summary, most of the categories were determined by the amount of 'wet' feel they created. The oil based products had a great advantage because of this.
- Further considerations for this project would be to investigate different criteria for comparison, to ones that are used more for people daily when buying lip balms; for example, ease of application, texture, cost and visual packaging.

Conclusion:

- **My recommendation is to stay away from 'regular' lip balms as they give a false sense of security (no healing, protection etc.) Also, stay away from petrolatum based products as they lead to lip licking when no lip balm is applied to lips, and therefore dry cracked lips. Do not believe any healing claims on products unless the active ingredients list clearly proves the ability.**

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