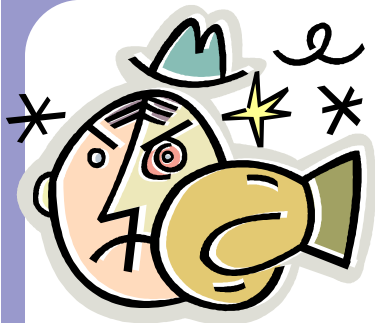


*Scientific Study****Assault & Battery by Perfume***

**"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."**

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A woman was arrested by the police for assaulting her medical provider with perfume. The assault resulted in the provider's hospitalization and a subsequent deterioration of health.

According to reports, the woman said she had sprayed on extra perfume to hide her smoking habit from the doctor. When the medical assistant commented on the strength of the perfume, the woman sprayed the assistant three times in the face causing the assistant's throat and face to swell before she collapsed to the floor.

The medical assistant had no history of asthma or negative reactions to fragrances. The exposure caused a chemical injury and she complained of new onset shortness of breath and sensitivity to all perfumes that persisted permanently after she was assaulted. It is not uncommon to become sensitized after an overexposure to a class of chemicals. This is commonly seen in multiple chemical sensitivity.

Fragrances are known as the leading cause of allergic contact dermatitis. Many of the 3,000–5,000 chemicals used in fragrances are known to contain the same toxic compounds that are in gasoline and tobacco. Most fragrance chemicals are derived from petroleum.

Since the fragrance industry is not regulated by any independent government agency, less than 20% of chemicals used in fragrances have been tested for human toxicity. Placebo-controlled challenges in patients with respiratory symptoms have documented airway hyperreactivity to perfume exposure. The National Academy of Sciences targeted fragrances as high priority for neurotoxicity testing.

Lessenger, the researcher who reviewed and reported on the case in scientific literature, says, "Fragrances have been found to cause exacerbations of symptoms and airway obstruction in asthmatic patients, including chest tightening and wheezing, and are a common cause of cosmetic allergic contact dermatitis."

The lesson to take away is that fragrances are toxic and should thus be respected. Breathing second-hand fragrance is no different than breathing second-hand smoke. Since everyone shares the same air, the use of scent amounts to assault and battery of those in the same airspace, which is a criminal act.

Reference

Lessenger, JE. Occupational acute anaphylactic reaction to assault by perfume spray in the face. *The Journal of the American Board of Family Practice*. 14(2):137-140.