

Sosa's lightened skin sends the wrong message

Skin lightening has serious effects on minority children in America

For many, truth remains in the lyrics of Big Bill Broonzy:

"If you're white, you're all right,
If you're brown, stick around,
But if you're black, get back."

As a consequence of Eurocentric beauty standards, minorities like baseball player Sammy Sosa feel pressured to bleach their skin.

"When I saw Sammy Sosa, I was shocked," said UNC Asheville baseball player Leon Stimpson. "I just don't understand why he would bleach his skin. He took so much pride in being Dominican."

Bleached skin, green-eye contacts and straightened hair on Sosa represent his lack of self-esteem.

If beauty to Sosa means hurting his body physically and psychologically, it's not worth it.

It's sad to think even after centuries of racism in America, people still feel they need to look white to obtain these standards.

"For a fan to see a man that may have been respected for so long do something like that to his skin, it's really sad," Stimpson said.

Our society is wrong to only focus on Eurocentric standards of beauty.

We should acknowledge other types of beauty, not just straight hair and lighter skin. Beautiful people exist in many different colors, shapes and sizes.

"Being a baseball player of color, I know how difficult it is to want to fit. But through it all, you have to celebrate your uniqueness," Stimpson said.

Minorities need to stop hating their natural features and accept how they were created at birth. If more minorities celebrated the beauty standards within their own culture, everyone wouldn't look alike and we could celebrate the beauty of our differences.

"I think Sammy Sosa's skin change shows how much men struggle with self-image as well as women," said UNCA Director of Intercultural Affairs Rory James.



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"Even in the 21st century, skin lightening is still an issue for people of color."

It is ridiculous skin-lightening products still exist on the market today.

So many beautiful men and women, from pale to dark-skinned, should flaunt their skin complexion with pride.

"His action doesn't mean that all people of color hate their skin. I, personally, love the color of my skin and do not feel the need to look lighter to be socially accepted," James said.

People who are self-conscious about their looks should realize cosmetics products may change your appearance, but will never change how you were created.

However, skin-lightening products made to bleach or lighten limited areas of hyperpigmented skin should not permanently injure the skin if used properly, according to the Food and Drug Administration.

People who use skin-lightening cream for beauty purposes instead of medical purposes should lose access to these products.

Only individuals with skin pigment issues should use these products, not people who want to look lighter.

Using skin-lightening products consistently could cause discoloration or darkening of the skin, according to the FDA.

A person should never feel so unattractive to endure extremely dangerous procedures to look beautiful.

Our society needs to reconstruct our ideal of beauty. A healthy person is a beautiful person, regardless of hair texture, facial features or body type.

Cosmetic procedures among Hispanics, blacks and Asians continue to outnumber

Dangers of Skin Bleaching

- * Mercury: Small doses can cause neurological damage.
- * Hydroquinone: This ingredient in skin bleaching is also found in film developing product.
- * Alpha Hydroxy Acids: used in facial chemical peels, but is used for serious and infrequent skin overhauls done by professionals. Ideally, should not be in the house.
- * Arsenic: Arsenic is a poison, which is sometimes found in skin lighteners.

Information courtesy of: <http://tyrashow.warnerbros.com>

procedures among Caucasians in America, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

When minority celebrities bleach their skin, they influence other minorities to hate themselves.

Sosa made a terrible decision because he encouraged a negative perspective toward dark-skinned people.

"His action probably has a bigger effect on Dominican children," Stimpson said. "Some children may think that if he changed his skin to be accepted in baseball, maybe I should do it."

Young minority children should never know about the cosmetic procedures done to minority celebrities because they may grow up to never accept themselves.

Our society needs to get over the belief that black skin is ugly, negative or inferior. All skin is beautiful, including dark skin.

"We still struggle with the Eurocentric ideal of beauty," James said. "Healthy and beautiful skin is not lighter skin, but skin that looks natural."

Who taught minorities to hate the color of their skin?

Unfortunately, the media and generational beliefs remain major influences on dark-skinned children and their ideas of beauty.

"Overall, this goes to show that there is an issue in our society with skin color," Stimpson said. "For centuries, being white was always associated with something pure or good and being black meant you were bad, violent or disgusting."

More parents should raise their children to believe they're beautiful regardless of their looks.

As individuals, we also need to compliment people with low self-esteem and encourage them to love the way they look.

"Although self-image may play an important part in Sosa's situation, we can't make judgment calls on what he does with his body because it is his prerogative," James said.

Our society should reject trends of Eurocentric beauty.

Minorities should take pride in what makes them different from other races. We should find ways to express our natural beauty, whether we're light or dark.

"I think that's one of the wonderful things about people of color," James said. "We come in many different shades that are all very beautiful."

What do you think about beauty standards? Visit thebluebanner.net to voice your opinion.