



# Benzophenone-UV filters in personal care products and urine of schoolchildren from Shenzhen, China: Exposure assessment and possible source

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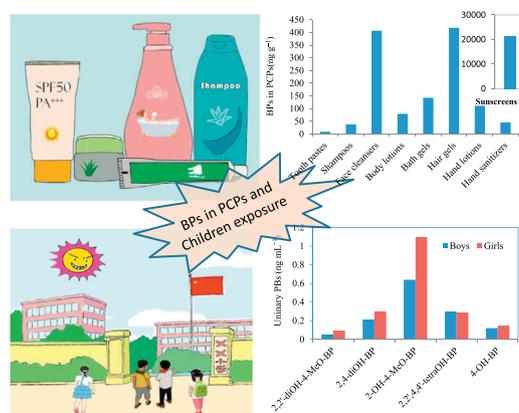
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## HIGHLIGHTS

- BPs in PCPs and urine of schoolchildren from Shenzhen China were measured.
- Sunscreens contained the highest BP concentrations among all PCP goods.
- Girls exhibited higher urinary BPs concentrations than boys.
- Body mass index has positive influence on urinary BPs.
- PCPs might play an important role for children exposure to BPs.

## GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 3 February 2018

Received in revised form 2 June 2018

Accepted 2 June 2018

Available online 7 June 2018

Editor: Adrian Covaci

### Keywords:

Benzophenone-type UV filter

## ABSTRACT

The use of benzophenone (BP)-type UV filters in personal care products (PCPs) has rapidly increased in China over the past decade, leading to growing concerns on the potential adverse effects associated with the usage. Urine analysis is an ideal non-invasive approach for human biomonitoring of xenobiotics that are excreted mainly through urinary system. To investigate human exposure of PCPs to children from South China, we determined BP-type UV filters in a total of 156 commercial PCP goods covering 11 categories, as well as 280 urine samples collected from elementary school students in Shenzhen, China. Five BP analogues (i.e., BP1, BP2, BP3, BP8, and 4HB) were frequently detected in both PCPs and urine, among which BP3 was the dominant analogue, accounting for 96.3% of the total BPs in PCPs and 53.2% in urine, respectively. Sunscreens contained the highest BP concentrations (mean:  $2.15 \times 10^4$  ng g<sup>-1</sup>) among all PCP goods. Girls exhibited higher urinary BP

**Abbreviations:** BMI, body mass index; BP, benzophenone; BW, body weight; EDI, estimated dermal intake; EDU, estimated dermal uptake; LODs, limits of detection; LOQs, limits of quantification; TEDED, total estimated daily excretion dose; UV, ultraviolet.

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Dermal intake  
Dermal uptake  
Personal care products  
Urine

concentrations than boys, and body mass index positively influenced BP concentrations. However, no regional difference in urinary BP concentration was observed. The estimated dermal uptake of BPs from PCPs after considering the percutaneous absorption rates was much lower than the estimated dermal intake. The total daily excretion doses estimated from urinary BPs were 74.4 and 47.4 ng·kg<sup>-1</sup>·bw day<sup>-1</sup> for girls and boys, respectively. The higher usage of body lotions, hand lotions, and sunscreens by girls than boys (1.49 vs. 1.03 times week<sup>-1</sup>) might play an important role.

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## 1. Introduction

The harmful effects from ultraviolet (UV) radiation have been well demonstrated. UV-filters are a group of compounds designed to protect skin and hair from UVA and UVB radiation, but they are also included in plastics, furniture, and many other goods to minimize light damage (Ramos et al., 2015). Most organic UV-filters can absorb UV radiation and attenuate the negative effects on human skin and hair (Kunisue et al., 2010). The family of benzophenone (BP)-type UV filters includes approximately 29 structurally related compounds, including benzophenone-1 (BP1) to benzophenone-12 (BP12) and other less documented analogues, such as 4-hydroxybenzophenone (4HB) and 2-hydroxybenzophenone (2-OH-BP).

These chemicals are broadly used in personal care products (PCPs), a large family of consumer products used for personal hygiene or beautification, including sunscreen products, cosmetics, beauty creams, skin lotions, lipsticks, hair dyes, shampoos, and others (Asimakopoulos et al., 2014; Balmer et al., 2005; Frederiksen et al., 2013a; Jiménez-Díaz et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2013). These products are generally intended for external use and considered harmless or relatively safe (Han et al., 2016). In the European Union, 26 different organic chemicals, including BPs, are permitted for the usage as UV-filters. The maximum allowable contents of these additives in PCPs range from 0.1% to 10% by weight (Vela-Soria et al., 2014). In China, the use of BP3 in cosmetics has rapidly increased over the past decade (Gao et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2013), leading to growing concerns on the potential adverse effects of BP substances on human health (Han et al., 2016).

Previous studies suggested that BP-type UV filters could interfere with endocrine systems (Schlumpf et al., 2001; Watanabe et al., 2015). Estrogen receptor-mediated reporter gene and uterotrophic assays indicated that BP3 is a potential endocrine-disrupting chemical, possessing weak estrogenic activities (Schlumpf et al., 2001). In vivo and in vitro tests suggested BP3 can be biotransformed into its hydroxylated forms, some of which (e.g., BP8 and 2,3,4-trihydroxybenzophenone) may exhibit greater estrogenic activities than BP3 (Jeon et al., 2008; Kim and Choi, 2014). Other endocrine disrupting activities, such as the stimulation of the proliferation of the breast cancer cell line MCF-7, have also been reported for BPs such as *p*-hydroxybenzophenone (Nakagawa and Suzuki, 2002).

Because of their large use in PCPs and the subsequent discharges via domestic sewage or release from BPs-containing products, BPs have become ubiquitous in the environment (Balmer et al., 2005; Han et al., 2016; Kim and Choi, 2014). Although some reports have assumed that PCPs, particularly sunscreen products, were likely the main BP source to humans, other studies did frequently detect BPs in people who did not use sunscreens (Frederiksen et al., 2017). In fact, knowledge still remains limited in the types and concentrations of BPs in a wide range of PCPs. Exposure of children to BPs was subjected to much less investigations than the studies on adults or general populations. To date only a few studies have investigated BPs in PCPs or the associated exposure in Chinese children (Gao et al., 2011; Liao and Kannan, 2014a; Wang and Kannan, 2013; Zhang et al., 2013). It remains unclear whether PCPs are the main BP source to children.

Urine is an ideal non-invasive matrix for human biomonitoring of many xenobiotics with short half-lives (e.g., BPs) that are excreted mainly as free and conjugated forms (Asimakopoulos et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2018a, 2018b). The objectives of our study were to determine the estimated dermal intake (percutaneous absorption rates of chemicals are not considered) and uptake (percutaneous absorption rates are factored into the calculation) of BPs via PCP usage and the internal exposure estimated from urinary BPs. In the present study, we investigated urinary BPs in schoolchildren from Shenzhen of Guangdong province, South China. A variety of PCP products were also sampled and analyzed for BP compositions and concentrations.

## 2. Material and methods

### 2.1. Reagents and materials

Reference standards of five target BPs, including BP3 (purity >98%), 4HB (purity >98%), BP1 (purity >99%), BP2 (purity >97%), and BP8 (purity >98%), were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich, USA. Internal standards BP3-<sup>13</sup>C<sub>6</sub> (purity >99%) and BP1-d<sub>5</sub> (purity >98.8%) were obtained from the Cambridge Isotope Laboratories, Inc (USA) and the CDN Isotopes (Quebec, Canada), respectively. The β-glucuronidase/arylsulfatase (85,000 β-glucuronidase units mL<sup>-1</sup>) was obtained from Sigma-Aldrich, USA. High performance liquid chromatography grade methanol and acetonitrile were purchased from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany). The other reagents were analytical grade, and water was obtained by using a Millipore water purification system (Millipore Co., Ltd., Billerica, MA, USA). The NaAC-HAC buffer solution (pH = 5) was prepared by dissolving 30.2 g anhydrous sodium acetate into 500 mL of water containing 34 mL acetic acid (6 mol L<sup>-1</sup>).

### 2.2. Sample collection

A total of 156 PCP samples grouped into 11 categories were purchased from supermarkets and retail stores in Shenzhen in 2015. These products were mainly produced in China. The 11 categories were tooth paste (n = 28), shampoo (n = 15), face cleanser (n = 18), sunscreen (n = 12), body lotion (n = 8), bath gel (n = 21), hair gel (n = 7), hand lotion (n = 17), mask (n = 11), hand sanitizer (n = 17), and lipstick (n = 2). The PCP samples were kept at -4 °C until treatment.

A total of 280 urine samples were collected from children recruited from six elementary schools located in six administrative districts (Longhua, Bao'an, Futian, Luohu, Nanshan, and Yantian) of Shenzhen city during July–August of 2015. The recruited volunteers aged from 8 to 12 years old, including 145 boys and 135 girls. Before urine sample collection, the participants were asked to complete questionnaires under the direction of their parents or teachers. The questionnaire included demographic information such as age, sex, weight, height, and daily use habits of PCPs. The detailed demographic characteristics are summarized in Table S1. Approximately 50 mL of first-voided morning urine was sampled in a glass jar pre-cleaned with 0.1 mol L<sup>-1</sup> hydrochloric acid. After collection, the urine samples were stored with dry ice and immediately sent to the analytical laboratory where they were kept at -20 °C until use.

### 2.3. Sample treatment protocols

The PCP samples were processed using a previously described method with some modifications (Liao and Kannan, 2014a). Briefly, approximately 0.1 g of each sample was weighted and added into 4 mL methanol. After 200  $\mu\text{L}$  internal standards (BP3- $^{13}\text{C}_6$  and BP1-d $_5$ ; 1  $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$  each) were spiked, the sample was ultrasonically extracted for 30 min. After the supernatant was collected, ultrasonic extraction was repeated twice with 3 and 2 mL methanol, respectively. Extracts were combined and reconstituted in 10 mL methanol, filtered through a 0.22  $\mu\text{m}$  filter membrane, and then kept at  $-20^\circ\text{C}$  until instrumental analysis.

Extraction of BPs from urine was conducted through liquid-liquid extraction (Liao and Kannan, 2014a). Briefly, a 2 mL aliquot of thawed urine sample was transferred to a 10 mL glass tube with a lid. After 200  $\mu\text{L}$  internal standards (BP3- $^{13}\text{C}_6$  and BP1-d $_5$ ; 1  $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$  each) were spiked, 1.5 mL of NaAC-HAC buffer solution and 10  $\mu\text{L}$  of  $\beta$ -glucuronidase/arylsulfatase were successively added to the sample and incubated by shaking at  $37^\circ\text{C}$  for 8 h. After that, 3 mL ethyl acetate was added and the resulting solution was shaken for 1 min with hand and then centrifugated at  $6000 \times g$  for 3 min. The supernatant was collected and the extraction was repeated twice. The combined extract was concentrated to near dryness under nitrogen gas, reconstituted in 1 mL methanol, filtered through a 0.22  $\mu\text{m}$  filter membrane and stored at  $-20^\circ\text{C}$  until instrumental analysis.

### 2.4. Instrumental analysis

The determination of BPs was performed on a 20A HPLC system (Shimadzu, Japan), coupled with an AB Sciex Q-Trap 5500 mass spectrometer (MS/MS; Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA) with electrospray ionization (ESI) in the negative ion mode. An Atlantis C $_{18}$  column (2.1 mm  $\times$  150 mm, 5  $\mu\text{m}$ , Waters, Ireland) was used for chromatographic separation. The column temperature was set at  $40^\circ\text{C}$ . The mobile phases were methanol (containing 5% acetonitrile) and water with a flow rate of 0.3 mL  $\text{min}^{-1}$ . The linear gradient program started with 15% of methanol, increased to 80% of methanol in 5 min and held for 1 min, increased to 100% of methanol in 1 min and held for 4.5 min, then dropped to 15% of methanol within 2 min and held for 4 min. The injection volume was 10  $\mu\text{L}$ . The ion source was set at  $550^\circ\text{C}$ , and the ion spray voltage was set at  $-4500\text{ V}$ . The multiple reaction monitoring mode was performed for mass spectroscopic analysis. The MS parameters, including precursor ion, product ion, declustering potential, entrance potential, collision energy, and collision cell exit potential, are listed in Table S2.

### 2.5. Quality assurance and quality control

A procedural blank was processed along with every batch of 20 samples. No target compounds were detected in procedural blanks. Internal

standards were spiked to check for the signal variations during instrumental analysis and use for the quantification of the target substances. The mean recoveries of target BPs at three spiking levels (1, 10, and 50  $\text{ng mL}^{-1}$ ) ranged from 61.9% to 116% for PCP analysis and 73.7%–107% for urine analysis. The enzymatic hydrolysis extent of the conjugated BPs was investigated using 4-methylumbelliferyl glucuronide and 4-methylumbelliferyl sulfate. The deconjugation efficiencies were both higher than 85%. The regression coefficients ( $R^2$ ) of calibration curves developed from standard solutions with concentrations ranging from 0.1 to 50  $\text{ng mL}^{-1}$  were 0.991–0.999. The limits of quantification (LOQs) and limits of detection (LODs) of BP8, BP1, BP3, BP2, and 4HB, defined as ten or three times the signal-to-noise ratio (S/N), were 0.002, 0.044, 0.002, 0.197, 0.014, and 0.047  $\text{ng mL}^{-1}$  and 0.001, 0.014, 0.001, 0.059, 0.005, and 0.014  $\text{ng mL}^{-1}$ , respectively.

### 2.6. Data analysis

To determine external BP exposure from the usage of PCPs, two estimation methods were used in the present study, including the estimated dermal intake (EDI  $\text{ng}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}_{\text{bw}}\text{ day}^{-1}$ ) of a target substance, i.e., the daily dose applied to skin, and the estimated dermal uptake (EDU,  $\text{ng}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}_{\text{bw}}\text{ day}^{-1}$ ), i.e., the daily dose absorbed into skin. They were calculated according to the following equations (Zhang et al., 2017):

$$\text{EDI}_{\text{PCPs}} = \frac{C_p \times M \times f}{BW} \quad (1)$$

$$\text{EDU}_{\text{PCPs}} = \frac{C_p \times M \times f \times R}{BW} \quad (2)$$

where  $C_p$  ( $\text{ng g}^{-1}$ ) is the mean concentration of an individual BP in PCPs;  $M$  ( $\text{g day}^{-1}$ ) is the application amount of PCPs per day;  $f$  (dimensionless) is the retention factor of a BP on human skin;  $R$  (%) is the percutaneous absorption rate; and  $BW$  (kg) is the body weight of a subject. The parameters employed in the estimation are summarized in Table 1.

The internal BP exposure was estimated as the total estimated daily excretion dose (TEDED,  $\text{ng}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}_{\text{bw}}\text{ day}^{-1}$ ) according to the following equation.

$$\text{TEDED} = \frac{C_u \times V_u}{BW} \quad (3)$$

where  $C_u$  ( $\text{ng mL}^{-1}$ ) is the urinary concentration of an individual BP analogue;  $BW$  (kg) is the body weight; and  $V_u$  ( $\text{L day}^{-1}$ ) is the daily urine excretion volume. In the present study, a volume of 1.28 L was used as the 24 h urine volume for children, given that the urine volume is nearly equal to the total water intake including direct and indirect intake which is estimated to be 1.28 L/day (Exposure Factors Handbook of Chinese Population, 2016).

**Table 1**  
Parameters for the determination of dermal exposure to benzophenone-containing PCPs.

| PCP types       | Application quantities ( $\text{g day}^{-1}$ ) | Retention factor | References             |
|-----------------|--|------------------|------------------------|
| Tooth pastes    | 2.75   | 0.05             | SCCS, 2012             |
| Shampoos        | 12.8   | 0.01             | Liao and Kannan, 2014b |
| Face cleansers  | 4.06   | 0.001            | Liao and Kannan, 2014b |
| Sunscreens      | 0.41 <sup>a</sup>                              | 1 <sup>b</sup>   | SCCS, 2012             |
| Body lotions    | 8.69   | 1                | Liao and Kannan, 2014b |
| Bath gels       | 14.5   | 0.001            | Liao and Kannan, 2014b |
| Hair gels       | 13.8   | 0.01             | Liao and Kannan, 2014b |
| Hand lotions    | 2.05   | 1                | Liao and Kannan, 2014b |
| Hand sanitizers | 4.8 <sup>c</sup>                               | 0.01             | Bickers et al., 2003   |

<sup>a</sup> There were assumptions: (1) the schoolchildren used sunscreens one time per week; (2) sunscreens used only on face and hand with 2 mg per  $\text{cm}^2$  (Klimová et al., 2015); (3) the surface area of 1/2 area head and area hands were used (SCCS, 2012), and they are 650 and 700  $\text{cm}^2$  for 9–12 years, respectively (Exposure Factors Handbook of Chinese Population, 2016).

<sup>b</sup> It is used for leave-on products as body lotions.

<sup>c</sup> We used the data of toilet soap from the report by Bickers et al. (2003) in the present study because we could not obtain the data for hand sanitizers from literature.

The BP concentrations were expressed as  $\text{ng g}^{-1}$  in PCPs or  $\text{ng mL}^{-1}$  in urine. The sum concentrations of the five BP analogues were denoted as  $\Sigma_5\text{BPs}$ . For a measurement below the LOD, it was considered non-detectable and a zero was assigned. For a measurement higher than LOD but lower than LOQ, half of the LOQ value was assigned for statistical analysis when the detection frequency of the target was higher than 50%; otherwise a quarter of the LOQ value was assigned (GB 17378.2-2007, 2007). Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS 19 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA). The relationships among concentrations of target substances or between concentrations and other factors were analyzed using nonparametric correlation (Spearman) unless otherwise specified. The statistical significance level was set as the  $p$ -value lower than 0.05.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. Concentrations of BPs in PCPs

The BP analogues were detected in 87.3% of the analyzed PCP samples, indicating their ubiquitous occurrence in PCPs (Table 2). Among the target BP analogues, BP2 and BP1 had the highest and lowest detection rate, i.e., 74.0% and 34.0%, respectively. The mean and the highest concentrations of  $\Sigma_5\text{BPs}$  (sum concentrations of five BP analogues) were  $1.84 \times 10^3$  and  $4.67 \times 10^4 \text{ ng g}^{-1}$ , respectively (Table 2). The BP analogues constitute the main chemicals within the group of UV filters, and are extensively used as sunscreen agents to protect skin and hair from UV damage. Therefore, it was expected that sunscreen products could contain high BP concentrations. Indeed, the highest mean concentration of  $\Sigma_5\text{BPs}$  ( $2.15 \times 10^4 \text{ ng g}^{-1}$ ) was observed in sunscreens with concentrations up to  $4.67 \times 10^4 \text{ ng g}^{-1}$ . These levels are much lower than the allowed maximum levels of BP3 in sunscreens, i.e., 10%, 6%, and 5% (w/w) in Europe, USA, and Japan, respectively (Ko et al., 2016). Data of BPs (except BP3) in PCP products remain overall limited. Compared with the study by Liao and Kannan (2014a), the concentrations of BPs in PCPs collected from Shenzhen were comparable with those collected from other regions in China but much lower than those from the United States.

The compositional profiles of BP analogues revealed a dominance of BP3 in most PCP products, particularly in sunscreen, hair gel, hand lotion and mask products (Fig. 1). Although the detection rate of BP3 was not the highest, it appeared to be the most abundant (mean:  $1.77 \times 10^3 \text{ ng g}^{-1}$ ) among the five BPs in all PCPs, accounting for 96.3% of the  $\Sigma_5\text{BPs}$  and approximately 2–3 orders of magnitude higher than the other analogues. Among the BP analogues, BP3 is the most commonly used UV-filter because of its excellent ability to absorb and dissipate UV light. Consequently, sunscreen products contained the highest BP3 concentrations (mean:  $2.12 \times 10^4 \text{ ng g}^{-1}$ ) compared with other PCP products. A few BP3 metabolites, such as BP1 and BP8, are also used in different cosmetic products as sunscreen agents (Ma et al., 2015). However, the concentrations of BP1 and 4HB contributed <0.01% of  $\Sigma_5\text{BPs}$ , reflecting their limited use compared to BP3.

#### 3.2. Urinary BPs

Human exposure to BPs occurs through direct absorption via dermal contact, ingestion via food and dust, or air inhalation (Gao et al., 2015; Han et al., 2016; Kim and Choi, 2014; Wan et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2013). These chemicals are also rapidly excreted following uptake, mainly through urine (Ko et al., 2016). The detection frequency of BPs was 99.3% in urine from schoolchildren in Shenzhen, indicating their ubiquitous occurrence in human bodies (Table 3). The highest detection frequency was 99.3% for BP1, followed by 4HB (85.4%). This was distinctly different from the results in PCPs, where BP1 exhibited the lowest detection frequency.

Urinary BP concentrations varied greatly in the present study, from not detected to  $57.1 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$  with an average of  $1.62 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$

(Table 3). BP3 exhibited the highest concentration (mean:  $0.86 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ ) among the BP analogues, although its detection frequency was not the highest. Concentrations of BP1 in urine were comparable with those of BP2, although the latter had concentrations approximately 15 times higher than the former in PCPs. Urinary concentrations of BPs from Shenzhen schoolchildren are moderate when compared with BP3 data from other regions (median: <0.22 to  $62 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ ) as reviewed by Kim and Choi (2014).

To illustrate the occurrences and sources of BPs, the composition pattern of BPs was analyzed and shown in Fig. 2. Because of the relatively high concentrations of BP3 in PCPs and in environmental matrices

**Table 2**  
Concentrations ( $\text{ng g}^{-1}$ ) of benzophenone-type UV filters in personal care products.

|                             |        | BP8                | BP1  | BP3                | BP2  | 4HB  | $\Sigma_5\text{BPs}$ |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------------------|------|--------------------|------|------|----------------------|
| Tooth pastes<br>(n = 28)    | Mean   | 2.28               | <LOD | 6.33               | 0.22 | <LOD | 8.84                 |
|                             | Median | <LOD               | <LOD | <LOD               | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD                 |
|                             | Min.   | <LOD               | <LOD | <LOD               | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD                 |
|                             | Max.   | 39.6               | <LOD | 135                | 6.26 | <LOD | 135                  |
|                             | DF (%) | 21.4               | 0    | 14.3               | 3.57 | 0    | 32.1                 |
| Shampoos<br>(n = 15)        | Mean   | 1.24               | <LOD | 0.52               | 36.1 | <LOD | 37.9                 |
|                             | Median | <LOD               | <LOD | <LOD               | 35.6 | <LOD | 36.7                 |
|                             | Min.   | <LOD               | <LOD | <LOD               | 11.1 | <LOD | 11.1                 |
|                             | Max.   | 18.6               | <LOD | 7.78               | 67.3 | <LOD | 67.3                 |
|                             | DF (%) | 6.67               | 0    | 6.67               | 100  | 0    | 100                  |
| Face cleansers<br>(n = 18)  | Mean   | 101                | 0.15 | 234                | 66.7 | 5.54 | 407                  |
|                             | Median | 70.7               | <LOD | 86.3               | 53.7 | 2.34 | 255                  |
|                             | Min.   | 19.5               | <LOD | <LOD               | <LOD | <LOD | 45.6                 |
|                             | Max.   | 452                | 1.80 | $1.28 \times 10^3$ | 199  | 32.4 | $1.84 \times 10^3$   |
|                             | DF (%) | 100                | 11.1 | 88.9               | 88.9 | 88.9 | 100                  |
| Sunscreens<br>(n = 12)      | Mean   | 305                | 6.24 | $2.12 \times 10^4$ | 28.2 | <LOD | $2.15 \times 10^4$   |
|                             | Median | <LOD               | <LOD | $2.33 \times 10^4$ | <LOD | <LOD | $2.33 \times 10^4$   |
|                             | Min.   | <LOD               | <LOD | $1.67 \times 10^3$ | <LOD | <LOD | 1667                 |
|                             | Max.   | $2.66 \times 10^3$ | 74.9 | $4.40 \times 10^4$ | 150  | <LOD | $4.67 \times 10^4$   |
|                             | DF (%) | 41.7               | 8.33 | 100                | 25.0 | 0    | 100                  |
| Body lotions<br>(n = 8)     | Mean   | 28.4               | <LOD | 18.4               | 30.5 | 2.13 | 79.4                 |
|                             | Median | 27.5               | <LOD | 8.80               | 29.5 | 2.10 | 73.2                 |
|                             | Min.   | 15.6               | <LOD | 7.81               | 23.8 | 1.86 | 53.1                 |
|                             | Max.   | 44.5               | <LOD | 46.3               | 39.2 | 2.60 | 111                  |
|                             | DF (%) | 100                | 0    | 100                | 100  | 100  | 100                  |
| Bath gels<br>(n = 21)       | Mean   | 21.2               | <LOD | 96.1               | 25.7 | <LOD | 143                  |
|                             | Median | <LOD               | <LOD | 82.5               | 22.6 | <LOD | 104                  |
|                             | Min.   | <LOD               | <LOD | 8.51               | <LOD | <LOD | 32.9                 |
|                             | Max.   | 182                | <LOD | 288                | 107  | <LOD | 464                  |
|                             | DF (%) | 42.9               | 0    | 100                | 95.2 | 0    | 100                  |
| Hair gels<br>(n = 7)        | Mean   | 2.77               | 1.78 | 410                | 2.13 | 2.15 | 419                  |
|                             | Median | 2.00               | 1.74 | 364                | 2.19 | 2.13 | 378                  |
|                             | Min.   | 1.93               | 1.70 | <LOD               | 1.70 | 2.07 | 8.10                 |
|                             | Max.   | 7.41               | 2.04 | 754                | 2.46 | 2.23 | 762                  |
|                             | DF (%) | 100                | 100  | 85.7               | 100  | 100  | 100                  |
| Hand lotions<br>(n = 17)    | Mean   | 2.72               | 1.78 | 102                | 2.31 | 2.21 | 111                  |
|                             | Median | 2.13               | 1.81 | 96.3               | 2.25 | 2.27 | 103                  |
|                             | Min.   | <LOD               | 1.18 | <LOD               | 1.76 | 1.79 | 7.68                 |
|                             | Max.   | 8.37               | 2.53 | 196                | 3.19 | 2.55 | 208                  |
|                             | DF (%) | 88.2               | 100  | 94.1               | 100  | 100  | 100                  |
| Masks<br>(n = 11)           | Mean   | 1.83               | 1.60 | 29.6               | 1.81 | 1.95 | 36.8                 |
|                             | Median | 1.82               | 1.60 | 31.9               | 1.84 | 1.94 | 38.4                 |
|                             | Min.   | 1.52               | 0.89 | 7.31               | 1.54 | 1.63 | 13.6                 |
|                             | Max.   | 2.24               | 2.02 | 44.3               | 2.12 | 2.40 | 53.0                 |
|                             | DF (%) | 100                | 100  | 100                | 100  | 100  | 100                  |
| Hand sanitizers<br>(n = 11) | Mean   | 22.6               | 5.17 | 0.82               | 13.1 | 4.03 | 45.7                 |
|                             | Median | 15.9               | 3.82 | <LOD               | 12.0 | 2.28 | 37.4                 |
|                             | Min.   | 8.65               | 1.06 | <LOD               | 3.81 | 1.94 | 17.1                 |
|                             | Max.   | 61.6               | 17.8 | 9.01               | 35.0 | 12.1 | 118                  |
|                             | DF (%) | 100                | 100  | 9.09               | 100  | 100  | 100                  |
| Lipsticks<br>(n = 2)        | Mean   | 7.91               | 1.70 | <LOD               | 2.66 | 1.88 | 14.2                 |
|                             | Median | 7.91               | 1.70 | <LOD               | 2.66 | 1.88 | 14.2                 |
|                             | Min.   | 7.22               | 1.63 | <LOD               | 2.60 | 1.73 | 13.6                 |
|                             | Max.   | 8.60               | 1.77 | <LOD               | 2.71 | 2.03 | 14.7                 |
|                             | DF (%) | 100                | 100  | <LOD               | 100  | 100  | 100                  |
| All PCPs<br>(n = 156)       | Mean   | 43.9               | 1.32 | $1.77 \times 10^3$ | 20.6 | 1.59 | $1.84 \times 10^3$   |
|                             | Median | 2.00               | <LOD | 25.0               | 2.87 | <LOD | 64.3                 |
|                             | Min.   | <LOD               | <LOD | <LOD               | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD                 |
|                             | Max.   | $2.66 \times 10^3$ | 74.9 | $4.40 \times 10^4$ | 199  | 32.4 | $4.67 \times 10^4$   |
|                             | DF (%) | 62.0               | 34.0 | 64.0               | 74.0 | 48.0 | 87.3                 |

DF: detection frequency; LOD: limit of detection.

(Kim and Choi, 2014), BP3 remained to be the dominant analogue in urine, but its composition in urine (53.2%) was much less than that in PCPs (96.3%), likely due to biological transformation in human bodies. In the present study, BP1 accounted for 15.8% of the  $\Sigma_5$ BPs in urine, but only 0.07% in PCPs. A significant positive correlation was observed between the urinary concentrations of BP1 and BP3 (Pearson correlation coefficient  $r = 0.921$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and between BP2 and 4HB ( $r = 0.264$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). No correlations were observed among the other analogues. Animal study revealed that BP3 is metabolized mainly to BP1 (Jeon et al., 2008), which may explain the correlation between these two substances. The BP2 and 4HB might share similar sources, but the information on their exact sources is limited. Overall, the composition profiles of BP analogues in urine suggested that demethylation is a major route of BP3 metabolism (Jeon et al., 2008).

In the present study, we observed that the detection frequency of 4HB (85.4%) and its contribution (8.3%) to  $\Sigma_5$ BPs in urine were significantly elevated when compared with those in PCPs (48% and 0.09%, respectively). The result was consistent with the findings by Zhang et al. (2013) who reported a high detection frequency of 4HB in urine (61%) and suggested its extensive application in China. PCPs may be a likely, but not the most important source of 4HB, given the low concentrations of 4HB in PCP products. The BP3 may be another possible source of 4HB. Although there was no direct evidence showing that BPs can be metabolized to 4HB in humans, it has been reported that benzophenone can be metabolized to 4HB following oral administration in rats (Jeon et al., 2008). Considering there was no significant correlation between urinary concentrations of BP3 and 4HB, we believed that BP3 was not a main source of the latter chemical, although the possibility of metabolic formation cannot be completely excluded. By contrast, non-PCP sources (e.g., dusts) may be an important source for 4HB because of high 4HB concentrations found in dust (Wang et al., 2013). Additionally, 4HB exhibited a slower clearance rate than other BP analogues such as BP3 in human bodies (Zhang et al., 2013), despite that 4HB is even more hydrophilic ( $\log K_{OW} = 3.07$ ) than BP3 ( $\log K_{OW} = 3.52$ ). This may also result in relatively elevated compositions of 4HB in human urine compared with that in PCPs.

### 3.3. Gender, body mass index (BMI), and regional differences in urinary BP concentrations

Previous studies suggested that the presence of some chemicals in human bodies appears to correlate with personal habits rather than environmental exposure (Fent et al., 2010; Ko et al., 2016). For example, Ko et al. (2016) suggested that the differences in urinary BP concentrations between Korean and other populations could be explained by differences in ethnic groups, lifestyle, genetic factors, and PCP use patterns.

**Table 3**

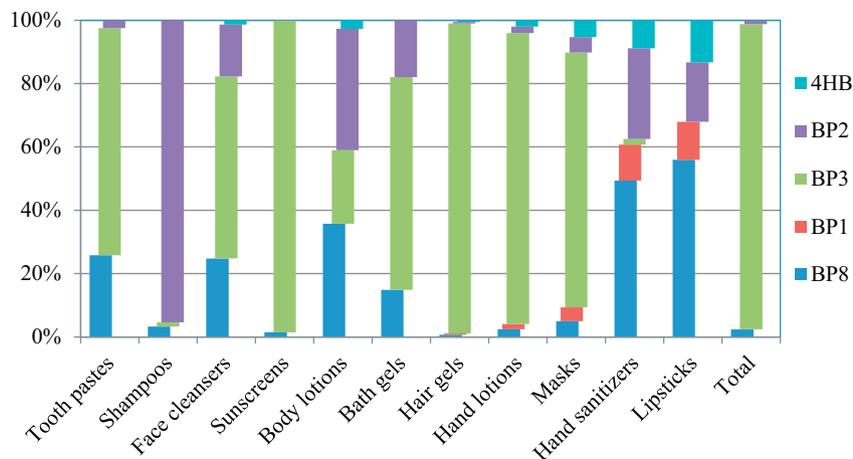
Concentrations (ng mL<sup>-1</sup>) of benzophenone-type UV filters in urine of schoolchildren from Shenzhen, Guangdong province of China.

|                    |        | BP8  | BP1  | BP3  | BP2  | 4HB  | $\Sigma_5$ BPs |
|--------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|----------------|
| Longhua (n = 50)   | Mean   | 0.12 | 0.13 | 0.33 | 0.86 | 0.15 | 1.59           |
|                    | Median | 0.04 | 0.08 | 0.20 | 0.26 | 0.12 | 0.91           |
|                    | Min.   | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD           |
|                    | Max.   | 2.58 | 0.75 | 3.43 | 10.5 | 0.63 | 11.3           |
|                    | DF (%) | 56.0 | 98.0 | 58.0 | 80.0 | 82.0 | 98.0           |
| Bao'an (n = 46)    | Mean   | 0.08 | 0.13 | 0.40 | 0.43 | 0.18 | 1.23           |
|                    | Median | 0.04 | 0.08 | 0.20 | 0.32 | 0.14 | 1.07           |
|                    | Min.   | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD           |
|                    | Max.   | 0.58 | 1.21 | 4.27 | 1.41 | 0.67 | 5.99           |
|                    | DF (%) | 78.3 | 100  | 60.9 | 84.8 | 95.7 | 100            |
| Futian (n = 44)    | Mean   | 0.05 | 0.17 | 0.21 | 0.26 | 0.15 | 0.84           |
|                    | Median | 0.04 | 0.08 | <LOD | 0.04 | 0.10 | 0.58           |
|                    | Min.   | <LOD | 0.03 | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | 0.06           |
|                    | Max.   | 0.22 | 2.38 | 2.55 | 2.09 | 0.55 | 4.85           |
|                    | DF (%) | 63.6 | 100  | 40.9 | 75.0 | 88.6 | 100            |
| Luohu (n = 49)     | Mean   | 0.03 | 0.28 | 1.23 | 0.05 | 0.06 | 1.64           |
|                    | Median | <LOD | 0.04 | <LOD | <LOD | 0.05 | 0.17           |
|                    | Min.   | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD           |
|                    | Max.   | 0.43 | 7.53 | 44.2 | 0.51 | 0.35 | 52.0           |
|                    | DF (%) | 20.4 | 98.0 | 34.7 | 42.9 | 61.2 | 98.0           |
| Nanshan (n = 49)   | Mean   | 0.08 | 0.57 | 2.47 | 0.10 | 0.17 | 3.38           |
|                    | Median | 0.04 | 0.13 | 0.44 | 0.01 | 0.05 | 0.91           |
|                    | Min.   | <LOD | 0.01 | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | 0.01           |
|                    | Max.   | 0.36 | 8.88 | 47.8 | 1.32 | 1.42 | 57.1           |
|                    | DF (%) | 63.3 | 100  | 87.8 | 59.2 | 95.9 | 100            |
| Yantian (n = 42)   | Mean   | 0.08 | 0.25 | 0.37 | 0.03 | 0.09 | 0.81           |
|                    | Median | 0.04 | 0.08 | 0.20 | <LOD | 0.05 | 0.48           |
|                    | Min.   | <LOD | 0.01 | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | 0.01           |
|                    | Max.   | 0.83 | 5.86 | 6.62 | 0.24 | 0.28 | 12.9           |
|                    | DF (%) | 52.4 | 100  | 69.1 | 42.9 | 90.5 | 100            |
| Shenzhen (n = 280) | Mean   | 0.07 | 0.26 | 0.86 | 0.29 | 0.13 | 1.62           |
|                    | Median | 0.04 | 0.08 | 0.20 | 0.02 | 0.05 | 0.59           |
|                    | Min.   | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD | <LOD           |
|                    | Max.   | 2.58 | 8.88 | 47.8 | 10.5 | 1.42 | 57.1           |
|                    | DF (%) | 55.4 | 99.3 | 58.6 | 64.3 | 85.4 | 99.3           |

DF: detection frequency; LOD: limit of detection.

These factors could lead to great inter-individual variation of human exposure to UV filters (Schlumpf et al., 2010).

To investigate the influence of gender, BMI, and regional differences on urinary BP concentrations, the characteristics of the study subjects were surveyed and summarized in Table S1. Urinary BP concentrations were positively associated with BMI ( $p = 0.048$ ) which had a mean value of 17.5 in the studied population. We did not observe significant differences in urinary BPs among participants from the six districts (one-way analysis of variance,  $p = 0.145$ ). Statistically significant difference in urinary BP concentrations ( $p = 0.048$ ) was found between girls (1.93 ng mL<sup>-1</sup>) and boys (1.33 ng mL<sup>-1</sup>) (Table S3). This was likely



**Fig. 1.** Composition profiles of benzophenone-type UV filters in personal care products.

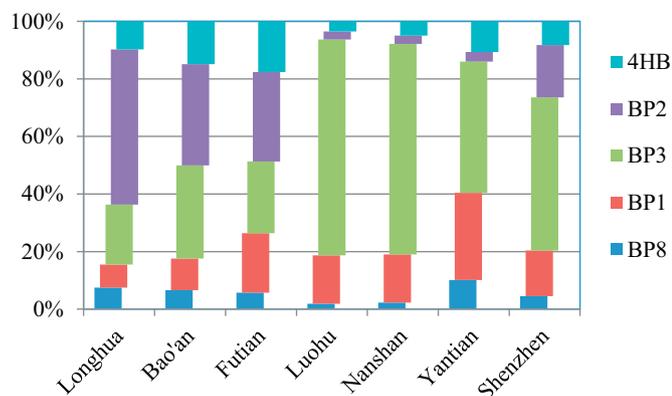


Fig. 2. Composition profiles of benzophenone-type UV filters in urine of schoolchildren from Shenzhen.

attributed to the higher usage frequency and amount of sunscreen and other cosmetic products containing UV filters used by girls than boys, especially for body and hand lotion (1.49 vs. 1.03 times week<sup>-1</sup>) (Table S1).

Previous studies generally revealed greater urinary BP concentrations in females than those in males (Kim and Choi, 2014; Sun et al., 2016). Sun et al. (2016) reported greater BP3 concentrations in females than in males and attributed the results to more use of cosmetics by females, while suggesting that PCPs were a group of important BP sources to humans, especially for BP3. Kunisue et al. (2010) analyzed BPs in urine collected from a male sunscreen user and two non-sunscreen users, and found notably higher concentrations of BP3 and BP1 in urine from the sunscreen user. A similar pattern was also reported for other PCP-related chemicals. For example, a Swedish study reported a positive correlation between urinary methyl/propyl paraben concentrations and an increased PCP use (Larsson et al., 2014). They also found that the participants who used sunscreen products had significantly higher urinary ethyl paraben concentrations than those who did not use sunscreens.

#### 3.4. Estimation of human external and internal exposure to BPs

Dermal absorption is one of the main pathways of human exposure to chemicals (e.g., synthetic musks and BPs) added to PCPs, despite that skin could provide a protective barrier (Kunisue et al., 2012; Nakata et al., 2015). However, knowledge on children exposure to BPs via dermal absorption of PCPs is very limited. The EDI of BPs and the EDU incorporating the percutaneous absorption rates were calculated and shown in Table 4. It was reported that approximately 10% of the applied dermal dose of BP3 can be absorbed and reach the systemic circulation (Jiang et al., 1999). A similar dermal absorption rate (i.e., approximately 10%) was also reported for bisphenol A, triclosan, and synthetic musks, and used to assess the human dermal uptake (von Goetz et al., 2017;

Demierre et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2017). The BP chemicals have octanol-water partition coefficients similar to those chemicals. Therefore, in the present study, the absorption rate of 10% was used for BP3. Given a lack of published percutaneous absorption rates for the four BP analogues other than BP3, an absorption rate of 10% was assigned to them to estimate the EDU through dermal contact with PCPs. In addition, mask and lipstick products were not included in the EDI estimation because the schoolchildren hardly use these products.

The mean total EDI value for  $\Sigma_5$ BPs was estimated to be 283 ng·kg<sup>-1</sup><sub>bw</sub> day<sup>-1</sup> (Table 4). BP3 was the main contributor, accounting for 92.9% of the total EDI. Sunscreen products contributed 89.9% of the total EDIs among all PCPs (Table S4). This was mainly attributed to the much higher BP concentrations in sunscreen products. These findings were consistent with the data from other studies (Kim and Choi, 2014; Ko et al., 2016). However, the amount of a chemical in PCPs does not necessarily reflect the absorbed fraction because a portion still remains on the skin and can be washed. Only those absorbed through skin can reach the systemic circulation and exert adverse effects on humans. Thus, the percutaneous absorption rate is very important to the estimation of the dermal uptake of a chemical (von Goetz et al., 2017; Yu et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2017). Therefore, a total EDU of 28.3 ng·kg<sup>-1</sup><sub>bw</sub> day<sup>-1</sup> was estimated for schoolchildren by considering the percutaneous absorption rate.

Urinary concentrations of certain xenobiotics can be used in the assessment of daily exposure doses (Asimakopoulos et al., 2014). In addition, urinary BP3 has been used as a biomarker of BP exposure (Wang and Kannan, 2013). In the present study, the TEDED from urinary BPs was determined from urinary BPs and summarized in Table 4. The TEDED was 59.7 ng·kg<sup>-1</sup><sub>bw</sub> day<sup>-1</sup> for all schoolchildren. By gender, the TEDED was 74.4 ng·kg<sup>-1</sup><sub>bw</sub> day<sup>-1</sup> for girls, 1.57 times that for boys (47.4 ng·kg<sup>-1</sup><sub>bw</sub> day<sup>-1</sup>), which might reflect the elevated usage of body lotion, hand lotion, and sunscreen products by girls as aforementioned (1.49 and 1.03 times week<sup>-1</sup> for girls and boys, respectively, in Table S1). BP3 was the main contributor, accounting for 56.8% and 48.2% of the total TEDED for girls and boys, respectively (Fig. S1). The elevated BP1 levels in urine may also be resulting from BP3 exposure. The mean exposure doses of BP1 and BP3 in girls were generally higher than those in boys, although there were no statistical differences (Table 4). We also found that the exposure doses of BP2 and 4HB were comparable between girls and boys. It is very likely that BP2 and 4HB were originated from sources other than sunscreen products or the PCPs in general (Frederiksen et al., 2013b; Han et al., 2016; Kim and Choi, 2014; Wang et al., 2013). To more understand the sources of BPs in children, many studies are needed.

#### 4. Conclusions

The present study determined BP-type UV filters in a total of 156 commercial PCP goods covering 11 categories and 280 urine samples collected from elementary school children in Shenzhen, China. Five BP analogues were frequently detected in both PCPs and urine, among which BP3 was the dominant analogue. Sunscreens contained the highest BPs among all PCP products. Girls exhibited higher urinary BPs and the total daily excretion doses than boys because of a more use frequency of body lotions, hand lotions, and sunscreens by girls. The PCPs appear to an important source for BP exposure in children. To better understand the sources of BPs in children, many investigations should be done.

#### Acknowledgements

This study was funded by the Natural Science Foundation of Guangdong Province, China (No. 2015A030313869), the Shenzhen Municipal Government Research Projects (No. JCYJ20160428143348745, JCYJ20170306160146913), and the Guangzhou Key Laboratory of Environmental Exposure and Health (No. GZKLEEH201610).

Table 4  
Human external and internal exposure to benzophenone-type UV filters.

|                | External exposure<br>(ng·kg <sup>-1</sup> <sub>bw</sub> day <sup>-1</sup> ) |      | Internal exposure<br>(TEDED, ng·kg <sup>-1</sup> <sub>bw</sub> day <sup>-1</sup> ) |      |              |
|----------------|---|------|--|------|--------------|
|                | EDI   | EDU  | Girls  | Boys | All children |
| BP8            | 11.0  | 1.10 | 3.66   | 1.91 | 2.71         |
| BP1            | 0.19  | 0.02 | 11.6   | 7.66 | 9.45         |
| BP3            | 262   | 26.3 | 42.3   | 22.9 | 31.7         |
| BP2            | 8.27  | 0.83 | 11.1   | 10.7 | 10.9         |
| 4HB            | 0.68  | 0.07 | 5.72   | 4.29 | 4.93         |
| $\Sigma_5$ BPs | 283   | 28.3 | 74.4   | 47.4 | 59.7         |

EDI: estimated dermal intake; EDU: estimated dermal uptake; TEDED: total estimated daily excretion dose.

## Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2018.06.015>.

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