# Skin Lightening Consumer Education Project

## Investigators

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## Project Summary

In April 2022, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced that it had received reports of serious side effects, including skin rashes, facial swelling, and ochronosis (discoloration of skin) from the use of over the counter (OTC) skin lightening drug products containing hydroquinone and mercury. Hydroquinone and mercury are two active ingredients sometimes found in illegally marketed OTC skin lightening drug products sold in the form of creams, lotions, soaps, or powders. When these ingredients are used on skin, they are absorbed into the body, which can be harmful.
To build a foundation for the development of an educational initiative, the FDA's Office of Minority Health and Health Equity (OMHHE) collaborated with the Reagan-Udall Foundation for the FDA to conduct formative research among diverse stakeholders for their perspectives, attitudes, knowledge, and motivations for the use of and potential risks from skin lightening products containing hydroquinone or mercury. Through listening sessions, this formative research provided an in-depth understanding of consumer perspectives on OTC skin lightening products and informed the development of tailored communications to educate communities on the potential risks and harms of these products.

**Populations Served**: Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, and Hispanic or Latino

**Goals/Aims:**

- To support the FDA's OMHHE in understanding public perceptions about OTC skin lightening products and potential safety risks; and identifying what information people need to make informed decisions.

## Publications/Abstracts/Posters, etc.

- **Advancing Health Equity: Efforts to Expand Education on Skin Lightening Products**. In Press.