



PRESS RELEASE

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Cold Virus Notwithstanding: Excessive Hand Washing Is Harmful

Mild skin products developed, supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Washing your hands regularly might offer protection from pathogens during the current cold season, but you shouldn't overdo it. In an article published on the website www.biooekonomie.de Prof. Detlef Goelling of the research company Organobalance warns that aggressive cleaning with common disinfectants will kill not only harmful microbes, but also many healthy bacteria. Destroying your healthy skin flora "creates space for pathogenic strains which colonise your skin", Goelling emphasises. This may cause inflammation.

A better way would be to use more gentle means when combatting bacterial skin contamination. Organobalance GmbH, a member of the BIOCATALYSIS 2021 cluster which receives funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, has developed skin-friendly biological agents to disinfect hands and surfaces. A team of researchers led by Goelling, who is Director of the Development Department at Organobalance and honorary professor at University of Applied Sciences Flensburg, took conventional body wash and added lactic acid bacteria they had previously identified. Tests showed that the bacterial strains effected a significant reduction in pathogens on the skin's surface. They attracted coli bacteria and salmonella "like a magnet", thus preventing them from re-colonising the skin.

Organobalance has assembled several thousands of different bacteria and yeast strains like these, resulting in one of the world's largest strain collections. "It is from this pool that the lactobacilli strains were fished which are used for skin care, against tooth decay, or to combat the stomach bacteria *Helicobacter pylori*," the article says. Helped by a proprietary screening programme, the researchers identify from the collection bacterial strains with the desired characteristics. In this case, these were: clean hands and remove pathogens while protecting healthy skin flora.

About Organobalance:

Organobalance GmbH is a biotechnology research and development company with facilities in Berlin and Flensburg. Founded in 2001, the firm develops and markets products based on probiotic bacteria cultures as well as yeast production strains for use in industrial biotechnology. One of its best-known products is Pylopass™, a natural agent against *Helicobacter pylori*, a stomach bacterium. Among the company's German and international customers are clients from the food, cosmetics, feed, agriculture, and pharmaceutical industries. The company owns an extensive collection of yeast and lactobacillus cultures, some of which date back to the 1920s. Christine Lang, the company's Managing Director, is also a Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics at the TU Berlin and has received several business awards. In September 2016, Organobalance was acquired by the Danish company Novozymes A/S.



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