Belly Button Bacteria

Schmidt, Kathleen (School: Ashley Public School)

Do you have a belly button? If so, this is the project for you. Bacteria can survive in various environments all over the world. The skin, including the belly button, is no different. While research on microbes in the belly button is relatively new, the Belly Button Diversity project was launched in 2011. As the first of its kind, the experiment discovered that many different and surprising species of bacteria can be found in the belly button. The purpose of my experiment is to identify the species and quantity of bacteria found in the belly button based on age and gender. To discover the bacteria in the belly button, I first gathered 40 test subjects equally separated by age and gender. Then each person swabbed their own belly button and the contents were put in an agar plate. After that, the bacteria colonies were placed in an incubator and counted every 24 hours for 3 days. Next, the colonies were brought to the University of Mary to be gram stained and identified. Every belly button in this project had identifiable bacteria. In conclusion this project gave insight that bacteria counts didn't rely on gender but were very dependent on age. Children and teenagers had the biggest colony counts, and adults (20-49) had the least. Elderly people and children had the most diversity in their belly buttons. There were also many trends in the bacteria identified in the belly button. After experimentation, I believe that there is a new opening in how we view bacteria and our skin.

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