

Psych stress can worsen skin disorders

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U.S. scientists have found inhibiting glucocorticoid, a type of steroid, can prevent skin abnormalities induced by psychological stress.

The study, conducted by researchers from the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in San Francisco and the University of California-San Francisco, also showed how psychological stress induces skin abnormalities that could initiate or worsen skin disorders such as psoriasis and atopic dermatitis.

Previous research has shown psychological stress increases glucocorticoid production. In addition, it is well recognized psychological stress adversely affects many skin disorders, including psoriasis and atopic dermatitis.

"In this study, we showed that the increase in glucocorticoids induced by psychological stress induces abnormalities in skin structure and function, which could exacerbate skin diseases," Kenneth Feingold, one of the researchers, explained, noting the finding provides a link for understanding how psychological stress can adversely affect skin disorders.

Blocking the production or action of glucocorticoids prevented the skin abnormalities induced by psychological stress, he said.

The study appears in the December issue of the American Journal of Physiology-Regulatory, Integrative and Comparative Physiology.

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