

# Patients with skin disease deserve better treatment

April 13 2012, By Lindsay Brooke

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Better access to specialists, more relevant training for health professionals and the introduction of reliable data to manage services effectively — these are the recommendations of a major review carried out by experts at The University of Nottingham into health care for patients with skin disease.

Skin disease is one of the commonest problems seen in Primary Care. Nearly a quarter of the population in England and Wales went to their GP with a skin problem in 2006 — the most common reasons being skin infections and eczema. The quality of life for people with skin disease such as psoriasis, atopic eczema and acne can be significantly impaired leading to psychological problems, disability and loss of earnings. It led to nearly 4,000 deaths in the UK in 2005.

The report *Skin conditions in the UK: a Health Care Needs Assessment* was led by Dr. Julia Schofield, who is now at the University of Hertfordshire, and a team of experts based in the Centre of Evidence

Based Dermatology (CEBD) in Nottingham. Their findings will be presented today at the University of Hertfordshire.

Hywel Williams, Professor of Dermato-Epidemiology and Director of the CEBD said: “Despite skin disease being very common, the direct cost to the NHS in providing care is relatively modest. Access to specialists is not easy and many people who suffer from skin disease are still turning to over the counter (OTC) products to treat skin problems. The high sales of OTC skin products suggest that people buy from pharmacies yet training of pharmacists in the management of skin problems is limited. The report says that new service delivery models are needed if the growing number of patients with skin disease are to get the right health care at the right time. Although there is a range of highly specialised skills in supra-specialist centres for people with rare or complicated dermatological disease the vast majority of patients need access to appropriately trained health care professionals in primary care and easier access to specialists when needed.”

The report was carried out independently by the Centre of Evidence Based Dermatology, and is aimed at helping health care commissioners, health care workers and people who access these services to be more informed about the bigger picture of skin disease and how it might be best treated at a community level. It has made 10 key recommendations saying the impact of [skin disease](#) on quality of life and response to treatment has to be embedded in every day clinical practice.

A free copy of the report can be found at:

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/dermatolo... ConditionsUK2009.pdf](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/dermatolo... ConditionsUK2009.pdf)

Provided by University of Nottingham

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