

Safer treatment for teens with acne

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UQ Centre for Clinical Research Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Dr James Scott has developed new guidelines for the safe prescription of a common acne drug linked with suicide and depression.

(Medical Xpress)—A University of Queensland researcher has developed new guidelines for psychiatrists and dermatologists to safely prescribe a common acne drug linked with suicide and depression.

The study offers [guidelines](#) for Australian [health professionals](#) when prescribing and treating [acne](#) patients with the drug Roaccutane.

UQ Centre for Clinical Research Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Dr James Scott said the guidelines would reduce variations in how clinicians

used the drug, containing active ingredient isotretinoin, to treat acne in teenagers.

"These guidelines draw on the expertise of a range of specialists and set out standard recommendations, particularly in relation to pre-treatment screening and post-treatment monitoring of patients," Dr Scott said.

"Acne can damage adolescents' psychological well-being,, burdening them with feelings of embarrassment, frustration and anger.

"This medication is being prescribed to a population of adolescents who are already at an increased risk of depression because of their acne."

Dr Scott said the recommendations would guide clinicians on the safe prescription and monitoring of the drug.

"If a young person's acne is severely impacting their quality of life, a treatment like Roaccutane should be considered, regardless of the severity of their condition," Dr Scott said.

"However, anyone who is considered for treatment of Roaccutane should have careful monitoring during treatment and after medication has ceased."

Researchers also recommend adolescents should be screened for [mental health problems](#) before starting the medication.

"Any existing mental health symptoms should be identified and, where appropriate, [clinicians](#) should work with the teenager's general practitioner or [mental health](#) practitioner," he said.

There should be clear communication between parents/carers, patients and relevant health professionals, to ensure any problems could be

managed safely.

"Communication and awareness of risks by all involved are the key to preventing tragic outcomes," he said.

More information: "Isotretinoin and mental health in adolescents: Australian consensus." Casey Rowe, Lynda Spelman, Margaret Oziemski, Alexander Ryan, Shobhan Manoharan, Perry Wilson, Michael Daubney, James Scott. Article first published online: 28 NOV 2013.
[DOI: 10.1111/ajd.12117](https://doi.org/10.1111/ajd.12117)

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