

Review suggests habit reversal beneficial in atopic dermatitis

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(HealthDay)—Habit reversal (HR) seems to be beneficial for reducing scratching among patients with atopic dermatitis (AD), according to a review published online Sept. 19 in the *British Journal of Dermatology*.

Noting the contribution of scratching to AD disease perpetuation, Adam Daunton, from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, U.K., and colleagues discuss approaches to eliminate habitual scratching in AD, focusing on HR, which involves a basic form of [cognitive behavioral therapy](#) and aims to raise awareness of patients' automatic subconscious behaviors and teach a competing response.

The researchers reviewed data from 12 potentially relevant articles. A

significant reduction in scratching frequency was seen after two instructional HR sessions in an early uncontrolled study; the effect was maintained for at least six months. In two small-scale randomized controlled trials, two HR sessions correlated with significant reductions in scratching frequency at four weeks. In recent meta-analyses, HR was found to reduce AD severity and [scratching](#).

"Whilst there is a need for further high-quality research to explore the effectiveness of HR in more patients with AD over longer timeframes, this should not preclude consideration of its contemporary usage in appropriately selected cases," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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