

Why people experience seasonal skin changes

March 7 2018

A new *British Journal of Dermatology* study provides information that may help explain why many people experience eczema and dry skin in the winter.

In tests of skin on 80 adults, the levels of breakdown products of filaggrin—a protein that helps maintain the skin's barrier function—changed between winter and summer on the cheeks and hands. Changes were also seen regarding the texture of corneocytes, cells in the outermost part of the skin's epidermis.

"This study shows clearly that the skin barrier is affected by climatic and seasonal changes. Both children and adults suffer from red cheeks in the winter in northern latitudes and some may even develop more permanent skin conditions such as [atopic eczema](#) and rosacea," said senior author Dr. Jacob Thyssen, of the University of Copenhagen, in Denmark. "By the use of high magnification we show that the [skin cells](#) suffer from shrinkage and therefore change their surface. The clinical message to individuals are that they should protect their skin with emollients in the winter and sunscreen in the summer.

Nina Goad of the British Association of Dermatologists said: "We already know that humidity can affect the texture of the skin and impact on [skin disorders](#) like eczema, and humidity fluctuates according to season. In the winter, rapidly changing temperatures, from heated indoors to cold outdoors environments, can affect the capillaries, and prolonged exposure to wet weather can strip the skin's barrier function. This latest study is interesting as it sheds new light on further reasons for

seasonal skin changes, at a cellular level. Given that skin problems are the most common reason for people to visit their doctor, any research that improves our understanding of [skin](#) disorders and how best to manage them is always a positive step."

More information: K.A. Engebretsen et al, Changes in filaggrin degradation products and corneocyte surface texture by season, *British Journal of Dermatology* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/bjd.16150](https://doi.org/10.1111/bjd.16150)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: Why people experience seasonal skin changes (2018, March 7) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-03-people-seasonal-skin.html>

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