

# **A programme of research to set priorities and reduce uncertainties for the prevention and treatment of skin disease**

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## Plain English summary

### The prevention and treatment of skin disease

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## Plain English summary

This report on skin disease is a large body of work that includes various projects within five main work programmes.

Our eczema prevention work showed that using skin moisturisers from birth may stop eczema developing. The potential of this important finding will now to be tested in a national trial.

Our eczema treatment work programme summarised and mapped all the best evidence for treatment, which health-care professionals and patients can now use. A lot of the existing evidence is unsuitable for guiding clinical practice. We have tried to correct this by doing bigger and better studies on topics that patients have prioritised.

Similarly, many vitiligo treatment trials were poor quality and few considered whether or not a treatment was worthwhile from the patient's point of view. Therefore, we prioritised working with patients and developed better outcome measures, which are being used in a national trial of handheld ultraviolet light devices to treat vitiligo.

A common type of skin cancer is squamous cell skin cancer, which is increasingly common in fair-skinned, older people. Surprisingly, we found only one randomised controlled trial on this topic and so we focused our efforts on developing a national study to find how best to treat this cancer.

Finally, we completed a national clinical trial on two treatments [oral steroids or ciclosporin (Neoral®, Novartis Pharmaceuticals)] for the rare painful condition pyoderma gangrenosum. Neither of the drugs was very effective and similar results were seen with strong steroid ointments, which have fewer side effects.

This work has helped us develop interest in skin disease research among doctors, scientists and patients.



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