

# Randomised controlled trial of silk therapeutic garments for the management of atopic eczema in children: the CLOTHES trial

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## Plain English summary

### The CLOTHES trial

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## Plain English summary

**E**czema is a common childhood skin condition that impacts on quality of life as a result of symptoms such as itchiness, sore skin and impaired sleep. Patients are often keen to find non-drug treatments for eczema.

Some small studies had suggested that specialist silk clothing might help to improve the symptoms of eczema, but larger, well-designed studies are needed to be sure of these results.

The CLOTHing for the relief of Eczema Symptoms (CLOTHERS) Trial tested whether or not silk clothing could reduce the severity of eczema in children aged > 6 months. A total of 300 children, aged 1–15 years, with moderate to severe eczema, took part. A computer was used to decide whether the children received silk clothing plus usual eczema care (moisturisers and topical corticosteroids) or usual care alone. Children in the clothing group were asked to wear silk tops and leggings as often as possible, day and night, for 6 months. Weekly questionnaires and visits to the nurse at 2, 4 and 6 months were used to assess the impact of the clothing.

Three hundred children took part in the study. Most of the children taking part were aged < 6 years, and three-quarters had previously seen a hospital doctor about their eczema. The silk garments were worn for at least half of the time by 82% of the trial participants. We found no difference between the two groups for nurse-assessed eczema severity, use of topical corticosteroid creams, number of skin infections or quality of life. Wearing the clothing did not reduce the number of visits to the doctor for their eczema, or the use of eczema medications.

Overall, the trial suggested that specialist silk clothing is not a useful treatment for eczema in children and does not represent good value for money.



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