

Homeopathy and skin

Homeopathy in skin conditions

People with dermatological problems are often referred for homeopathy because they are not being helped by conventional treatments. Antibiotics, antihistamines and steroids are on offer to manage skin complaints and these may help in the short term, but can become ineffective over time or less well tolerated. Eczema patients are worried about the long-term effects of using strong topical corticosteroid cream, which can cause atrophy or thinning of the top layer of the skin. More people are referred for homeopathic treatment to the NHS homeopathic hospitals for eczema than for any other condition.

Other skin problems that are difficult to treat are also frequently referred to homeopathic practitioners – including acne, psoriasis, urticaria, molluscum contagiosum, seborrhoeic dermatitis, rosacea, vitiligo and alopecia areata. In addition homeopathy is used by podiatrists to treat conditions like verrucae, corns and bunions. Creams, tinctures, oils, and Marigold Therapy are used alongside homeopathic medicines.

The evidence

There are randomised controlled trials showing positive evidence for homeopathy in both seborrhoeic dermatitis and radiotherapy-induced dermatitis. In addition a recent study of 118 eczema patients published in *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* journal reported that homeopathy was as effective as standard conventional treatments in the short-term and more effective than them in the longer term.

Outcomes studies conducted at the NHS homeopathic hospitals provide additional important evidence from patients themselves: in a survey of over 6,500 consecutive patients conducted over a six year period at Bristol Homeopathic Hospital, 82% of under-16s with eczema reported a clinical improvement. On average, 70% of patients report an improvement after homeopathic treatment at the hospitals, for a diverse range of conditions.

Where to find a regulated homeopathic practitioner

Members of the Faculty of Homeopathy are conventional doctors trained in homeopathy. This means they are regulated by the General Medical Council. They hold the qualifications LFHom, MFHom or FFHom.

A full list of practitioners is available at www.britishhomeopathic.org or by calling 01582 408675.



What is homeopathy?

Homeopathy is a system of medicine that works on the principle of using like to cure like. In other words, a substance taken in small amounts will cure the same symptoms it causes if it was taken in large amounts. The medicines are derived mainly from plants and minerals.

The active ingredient is diluted many times (making it completely safe) and succussed (shaken vigorously) to produce the medicine, which can be taken in tablet, granule or liquid form. Homeopathy is safe to use in children, the elderly, in pregnancy, and can be used alongside other medication without adverse effects.

The benefits of homeopathy

- Because the medicines are highly diluted, they can safely be used in babies, children and pregnant and breastfeeding women, under the supervision of an appropriately qualified practitioner.
- Homeopathy treats the whole person and takes into account that each person is different - medicines are selected not just on the symptoms presented but on other aspects of the patient, to build up a complete picture of the individual.
- Homeopathic medicines are gentle and side effects are rare.

