

# **Overview: Psoriasis Holistic Lifestyle Pilot**

## **Barts Health Dermatology**

**Team :** Professor Rino Cerio (Professor of Dermatopathology at the Institute of Cellular Molecular Science (School of Medicine and Dentistry) Queen Mary's University of London)  
Dr Abha Gulatti Consultant Dermatologist, Angela Braeger Lead Dermatology sister, Gee Gahir (Seasonal Wellbeing, Yoga & Nutrition Coach)

### **The Burden of Skin Disease in UK**

- Around 54% of the UK population experience a skin condition in a given twelve month period.
- 69% self care, 14% seek further medical advice from specialist.
- 24% of the population in England & wales visit their GP with a skin problem (2006 data)
- The most common conditions are skin lesions, eczema, psoriasis & acne.

[http://www.pcds.org.uk/ee/images/uploads/general/Skin\\_Conditions\\_in\\_the\\_UK.pdf](http://www.pcds.org.uk/ee/images/uploads/general/Skin_Conditions_in_the_UK.pdf)

### **The effect of Stress on Skin Health**

'Stress can affect your whole body, including your hair, nails, and skin. Since stress is a part of life, what matters is how you handle it.'

<https://www.webmd.com/beauty/the-effects-of-stress-on-your-skin>

Cortisol triggers a catalyst of physiological changes in the body, some of which include but are not limited to; changes in your breathing rate, loss of appetite or inflammation of the digestive system, inability to sleep or restlessness, tiredness and poor skin.

Although we can not control the stressor, we can learn techniques to help manage the effects of stress, thus changing the physiological impact of stress on the body-mind-skin.

Current coping mechanisms include unhealthy lifestyle habits such as smoking and unsociable drinking.

### **Skin Focus Group Pilot – Objective**

The objective of this pilot study was to develop and provide useful stress management tools to support patients with chronic psoriasis manage their stress as an adjunct to treatments.

### **QUALITY OF LIFE**

Patient reported outcome measures (PROMS), DLQI and Global stress management scores were included throughout the duration of the pilot study (6 week program with 3 month follow up)

Patients were identified and selected based on DLQI assessment and stress scores.

## **FOCUS GROUP NEEDS ASSESMENT**

Patients are experts in managing their psoriasis.

The initial meeting of the focus group identified needs assessment. The focus

group agreed that stress contributes to their psoriasis flare ups.

Symptoms include : over thinking, worry, sleeplessness, itchy, uncomfortable in skin, increased heart rate, short tempered 'snappy'

Common strategies used to overcome symptoms include : Talking therapy, smoking, and drinking

- No one had experienced a health & wellbeing workshop.
- Two patients have explored complimentary therapies
- Reiki - helpful at reducing severity of psoriasis
- Nutrition - avoidance of dairy
- The focus group felt there was no local support for them -No place to meet like minded people to share stories

Patients identified following areas they would like to explore further

- Pain management (psoriatic arthritis , sore inflamed skin)
- Relaxation techniques - to manage stress onset
- Reassurance about management of side effects - impact on wellbeing / focus on positives,
- improvements in QOL
- Make psoriasis sexy : improving relations (touch)

The original plan was to provide healthy lifestyle techniques over a 6-8week period. But logistically this proved difficult. The most beneficial workshops evolved to a once a month 2 hour focus group, each month with a hot topic related to skin health.

## **OUTCOMES**

- Attendees between 10-4 (4 dedicated attendee's every month)
- 100% strongly agreed the sessions were invaluable
- 100% agreed the sessions addressed their needs and would adopt healthier lifestyle changes.
- 80% said they would share the information and attend another healthy lifestyle session (most patients attended the days which they felt would be useful to their needs)
- 80% agreed the techniques improved their stress levels

Methods distilled from yogic science and 5 element wisdom were integrated as part of the holistic lifestyle education;

## **YOGA & Skin Health**

Acu-Yoga: yoga techniques designed off the mat with the addition of acupressure points to help reduce anxiety, stress, pain relief and inflammation.

## **STRESS MANAGEMENT & Skin Health**

A combination of 9 part yogic breath technique used by Gee in her recovery from hip surgery integrated with breathing techniques for PTSD developed by Dr Richard Brown <http://www.breath-body-mind.com/richard-brown-md.php>

## **NUTRITION & skin Health**

Skin Nutrition: Gee developed a general skin health guide based on seasonal cycles and effects on skin, whole food, anti-inflammatory advice and naturopathic guidance. In addition the role of vitamin D and essential omega oils on skin and joint health for psoriatic arthritis patients.

## **Summary**

The success of the pilot was articulated by the patient feedback.

## **Patient comments**

- Very invaluable – everyone should attend
- Feel Confident being in my skin
- Enhanced Happiness factor – stress less relax more
- Ability to recognise and manage stress easily before it takes control
- Incorporate me time everyday
- Breathing techniques were very useful
- Everything was explained well, Gee provided clear advice and I found it easy to engage

‘Thanks for organising such a great healthy lifestyle session Gee. I may need to book you in for some personal sessions!’ – Dr Abha Gulati

Although skin disease is considered a long term condition, educating and empowering patients with holistic stress management techniques offers choice in adapting healthier lifestyle habits.

Benefits include reduction of the physiological effects of stress on the body-mind.

The pilot identified a need for patient support earlier on in skin disease.

Gee provides bespoke Holistic stress management consultations specialising in skin health at SKIN55 Harley Street.

<http://www.2020holistichealth.com/contact>

## **References**

[http://www.pcds.org.uk/ee/images/uploads/general/Skin\\_Conditions\\_in\\_the\\_UK.pdf](http://www.pcds.org.uk/ee/images/uploads/general/Skin_Conditions_in_the_UK.pdf)

<https://www.webmd.com/beauty/the-effects-of-stress-on-your-skin>

<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2017/state-nation.pdf>

<https://www.psoriasis-association.org.uk/>

You are invited to  
**ACHIEVING HEALTHY SKIN  
LIFESTYLE & WELLBEING WORKSHOP** at The  
**Royal London Dermatology Department**  
**On (Date / Time)**



A half day workshop exclusively designed to support and empower patients with techniques to enhance wellbeing and skin health. Dermatology Specialists will be at hand to answer your questions.

# HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

- **UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF STRESS on WELLBEING**
- **NUTRITIONAL tips for vibrant skin**
- **Effective RELAXATION techniques**
- **THERAPEUTIC YOGA to ease painful joints**
- **Everything you need to know about Emollient use**

To book your place please leave your name and number at reception or contact

**Tel: 07979 775 789**

**Email: [2020holistichealth@gmail.com](mailto:2020holistichealth@gmail.com)**



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