

## **What are young people's experiences of managing eczema?**

### **Why did we do this research?**

Adolescence and early adulthood can be a particularly challenging time, especially for young people with eczema. When they were younger, their families mainly looked after their eczema, but now they have new roles and responsibilities around their eczema. More research is needed to better understand the specific challenges that this group face when looking after their eczema.

### **What did this research look at?**

Our research wanted to find out about young people's experiences of looking after their eczema and their interactions with health professionals. We spoke to 28 young people aged 13-25 years. The audio from each interview was written up and the authors looked for patterns in the data.

### **What did we find?**

Generally, young people felt that their prescribed treatments helped their eczema. However, some young people were not convinced that their treatments helped in the long-term and some were worried about the safety of their treatments. Young people welcomed the opportunity to be more involved in looking after their eczema, but talking to health professionals, getting prescriptions, or moving to an adult clinic, could sometimes be daunting.

Young people were more likely to avoid doing things that made their eczema worse if they personally believed that doing so would help their eczema. However, it was not always easy to avoid everything that made their eczema worse. For example, young

people found it hard not to scratch and some triggers, such as the weather, were hard to avoid.

### **What did we recommend from this research?**

Our research paper recommended that healthcare services should encourage young people to discuss their needs and treatment concerns with health professionals.

Young people should also be given the skills and confidence to look after their eczema and talk to health professionals.

As part of the ECO project, we used these research findings to help us to create the online toolkit for young people with eczema ([www.eczemaonline.org.uk](http://www.eczemaonline.org.uk)).

Specifically, it helped us to make sure the information and support provided in the toolkit met the needs, and addressed the concerns, of this group.

You can read the full paper here: <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/11/1/e044005.full>