A qualitative study of supporting lifestyle behaviour change in psoriasis patients - Are practitioners ready?

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BACKGROUND: Psoriasis is associated with unhealthy behaviours known to trigger onset/flare of the condition and to increase the risk for cardiovascular disease. Whether health-care practitioners managing people with psoriasis are confident to incorporate lifestyle behaviour change (LBC) techniques into routine consultations is unknown.

METHODS: In-depth, qualitative interviews were carried out with 23 practitioners managing psoriasis patients in the UK stratified by discipline. Interviews explored practitioners’ knowledge, skills and attitudes in relation to LBC, including perceived barriers. Data were analysed using Framework Analysis to identify key issues.

FINDINGS: Practitioners viewed LBC as important in managing psoriasis but believed such work was outside their role, citing organisational constraints and prioritisation of other goals as barriers. Limited knowledge and skills about lifestyle factors in psoriasis underpinned these beliefs, resulting in LBC being addressed only rarely in consultations.

DISCUSSION: Low levels of knowledge, skills and confidence among professionals about addressing lifestyle issues in psoriasis patients and a lack of structured support for LBC were identified. Findings will inform the development of training for staff and support materials to improve lifestyle in people with psoriasis.