Exploring healthcare professionals’ personal models about psoriasis: ‘we understand but we forget it’

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INTRODUCTION: Psoriasis is a long-term condition associated with significant psychological and physical disability. Illness beliefs or ‘personal models’ underpin patients’ mood, self-management, and healthcare seeking behaviours but little is known about health professionals’ understanding of psoriasis and how this informs clinical decision making. We examined health professionals’ personal models about psoriasis.

METHODS: In-depth interviews were conducted with 23 practitioners managing people with psoriasis. Analysis was informed by the Common Sense Model, and principles of Framework Analysis.

RESULTS: Practitioners often held incongruent personal models about psoriasis; while commonly aware of the condition’s complexity and long-term nature, they described more linear and narrowly focused approaches to management and acute skin-focused management strategies.

CONCLUSION: Practitioners’ understanding of psoriasis conflicts with their reported management of the condition. Addressing practitioners’ personal models of psoriasis may address the current mismatch between understanding and practice.