Are dermatology health professionals trained to deliver health behaviour change support for patients with psoriasis?

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INTRODUCTION: Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory skin condition. Unhealthy lifestyle behaviours contribute both to psoriasis onset and severity. Health professionals managing patients with psoriasis are well placed to support lifestyle behaviour change (LBC), but few feel confident to do so. The extent to which health promotion and LBC skills are included within training curricula in the UK is unclear. We systematically examined post-graduate training competencies across general and dermatology specialist health professionals for evidence of LBC skills.

METHODS: Core curricula documents from professional organisations were content analysed to examine the extent to which curricula: a) mentioned health promotion and LBC as part of the professional role; and / or b) included health promotion and LBC as explicit training competencies or requirements for qualification.

RESULTS: Of 11 core curricula documents analysed, 67 occurrences of terms related to LBC and health promotion were found. Most appeared in the General Practitioner curriculum (n=42; 62.7%), followed by the Dermatology Specialist Nurse curriculum (n=14; 20.9%) and Dermatologist curriculum (n=11; 16.4%). None were found in the General Practitioner with a Special Interest in Dermatology curriculum. Recommendations relating to LBC knowledge, skills and attitudes were not clearly specified in any documents and only described basic level competencies.

CONCLUSION: Core curricula must provide health professionals with the necessary evidence-based knowledge, skills and attitudes to support LBC in patients with psoriasis. This has particular resonance given the evidence linking unhealthy lifestyles with psoriasis outcomes.