Signposting health promotion for patients with psoriasis: Examining UK health centres

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BACKGROUND: Psoriasis is a long term condition (LTC) associated with unhealthy living (excess alcohol, obesity, smoking and inactivity), all of which exacerbate symptoms and possibly trigger the condition. Health promotion is a key aspect of LTC management and is necessary for secondary prevention and health settings are ideal places to promote healthy living information to patients. Whilst nudge techniques are becoming increasingly prevalent in UK, public health policy, whether current health promotion strategies take account of these techniques is unknown.

OBJECTIVES: To systematically examine health promotion signposting for people with psoriasis in health centre patient waiting areas, including both general health and psoriasis-specific health promotion messages.

METHODS: An observation schedule was developed to record the frequency and quality of health promotion materials. Content analysis was used to examine the characteristics and standard of materials using a series of quality indicators.

RESULTS: The final sample (n=24 health centres) included 262 sources of health promotion materials (median per site = 10; range= 0-40). These included: generic posters/displays of LBC support (n = 113); and generic materials in waiting areas (n = 98). Health promotion materials were of poor quality and were poorly displayed.

CONCLUSIONS: We found little evidence of psoriasis-specific patient information about health promotion. Nudge techniques do not currently inform the design and display of patient materials in standard health settings, constituting a missed opportunity to provide effective health promotion signposting. Theory informed health promotion messages would contribute to bridging the gap between population- and individual-level health promotion strategies.