



Professor Jonathan Benger, CBE MD FRCS FRCM
Chief Medical Officer and Interim Director of the
Centre for Guidelines
National Institute for health and Care Excellence

22 June 2023

Dear Professor Benger,

NICE clinical guideline for managing adults and adolescents with atopic dermatitis (AD)

Thank you for the recent email from colleagues at NICE dated 18th May with the news that the development of the above, long-awaited clinical guideline, where a collaboration was planned with the British Association of Dermatologists (BAD), has been 'stopped for the time being'.

We, representatives of the organisations listed below, would like to express our disappointment and concern with this decision. The additional information we have been provided indicates that there is no guarantee that the project will resume, once NICE has established its Prioritisation Board and a review of all temporarily halted clinical guideline projects has been undertaken.

Atopic dermatitis is a chronic condition affecting around 20% of children and 10% of adults in the UK, with a quality-of-life, psychological and economic burden similar to other chronic health conditions, such as asthma and diabetes.¹

An official, national clinical guideline on managing the condition is long overdue and much needed for many reasons. The absence of a guideline has resulted in variances in treatment and referral approaches, with significant implications for health inequalities. We need to standardise clinical practice across the UK to deliver the best care for all patients with AD. There has been recent progress too in better representing people with skin of colour in diagnosis and treatment protocols. The NHS England/Improvement Dermatology Outpatient Transformation Programme has also developed extensive guidance and resources that should be reflected in a national guideline, to support increased productivity and workforce issues across primary and secondary care. Over the past 15 years, since the publication of CG57 in 2007; nearly £15.5 million have been awarded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) for eczema studies (see attached appendix). Yet, none of the practice-changing results (summarised in the appendix) have been reflected in any guideline. Without this, precious resources are wasted. Many millions of pounds more have been and continue to be spent by the pharmaceutical industry on the latest and emerging therapeutics.² While these

¹ [The global burden of atopic dermatitis: lessons from the Global Burden of Disease Study 1990-2017](#). Laugter *et al.*, *Br J Dermatol* 2021, **184**: 304-9.

² [Atopic dermatitis: an expanding therapeutic pipeline for a complex disease](#). Bieber, *Nat Rev Drug Discov* 2022, **21**: 21-40





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treatments have been appraised by NICE, there is no UK clinical guideline that sets the treatment standard and clear treatment pathway.

We would, therefore, like to seek assurances that this project will not fall by the wayside once the prioritisation process has concluded.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Mabs Chowdhury
President, British Association of
Dermatologists

Dr Ser-Ling Chua
Chair, BAD Therapy & Guidelines sub-
committee

Professor Carsten Flohr
Chief Investigator, TREatment of severe Atopic
eczema in children Trial (TREAT)

Dr Andrew Pink
Chief Investigator, BEst systemic treatments for
adults with Atopic eczema over the LONG term
(BEACON platform trial)

Dr Tess McPherson
President, British Society for Paediatric and
Adolescent Dermatology

Professor Graham Roberts
President, British Society for Allergy and
Clinical Immunology

Dr Timothy Cunliffe
President, Primary Care Dermatology Society

Mrs Rebecca Penzer-Hick
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Group

Mr Andrew Proctor
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Allergy group, Chief Investigator COMET,
TEST, BEE and TIGER studies, GP & Professor
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APPENDIX

STUDY	FUNDER AND TOTAL FUNDS	KEY PUBLICATION
SWET Soft Water for Eczema Treatment – A randomised controlled trial of ion-exchange water softeners for the treatment of eczema in children	NIHR Health Technology Assessment £912,257	A randomised controlled trial of ion-exchange water softeners for the treatment of eczema in children N.B. https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/cebd/projects/swet.aspx
CREAM Children with Eczema Antibiotic Management – A pragmatic, randomized controlled trial in ambulatory care on oral and topical antibiotics for clinically infected eczema in children	NIHR Health Technology Assessment £1,007,106	Oral and Topical Antibiotics for Clinically Infected Eczema in Children: A Pragmatic Randomized Controlled Trial in Ambulatory Care
CLOTHES Clothing for the Relief of Eczema Symptoms – A randomised, controlled, observer-blind, pragmatic trial on silk sarments plus standard care compared with standard care for treating eczema in children	NIHR Health Technology Assessment £988,140	Silk garments plus standard care compared with standard care for treating eczema in children: A randomised, controlled, observer-blind, pragmatic trial (CLOTHES Trial) N.B. https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/cebd/projects/clothes/index.aspx
BATHE Bath Additives for the Treatment of childHood Eczema – A multicentre pragmatic parallel group randomised controlled trial of clinical and cost effectiveness	NIHR Health Technology Assessment £959,214	Bath additives for the treatment of childhood eczema (BATHE): multicentre pragmatic parallel group randomised controlled trial of clinical and cost effectiveness
COMET Choice of Moisturiser in Eczema Treatment – A feasibility study of a randomised controlled parallel-group trial in children recruited from primary care	NIHR Research for Patient Benefit Programme £331,571	Choice of Moisturiser for Eczema Treatment (COMET): feasibility study of a randomised controlled parallel group trial in children recruited from primary care Comparison of patient (POEM), observer (EASI, SASSAD, TIS) and corneometry measures of emollient effectiveness in children with eczema: findings from the COMET feasibility trial





BEE Best Emollients for Eczema – A pragmatic, randomised, phase 4 superiority trial	NIHR Health Technology Assessment £1,394,969	Effectiveness and safety of lotion, cream, gel, and ointment emollients for childhood eczema: a pragmatic, randomised, phase 4, superiority trial How parents and children evaluate emollients for childhood eczema: a qualitative study N.B. www.bristol.ac.uk/bee-study
TEST Trial of Eczema allergy Screening Tests – A randomised, controlled feasibility trial	NIHR School for Primary Care Research £438,692	Test-guided dietary management of eczema in children: a randomised, controlled feasibility trial (TEST) Parents' and GPs' understandings and beliefs about food allergy testing in children with eczema: qualitative interview study within the Trial of Eczema allergy Screening Tests (TEST) feasibility trial
Eczema Care Online & SPaCE Support for Parents and Carers of Children with Eczema – A pilot randomized controlled trial	NIHR Programme Grants for Applied Research £2,511,917 & NIHR Research for Patient Benefit £129,000	Eczema Care Online behavioural interventions to support self-care for children and young people: two independent, pragmatic, randomised controlled trials Strategies for using topical corticosteroids in children and adults with eczema Supporting self-care for families of children with eczema with a web-based intervention plus health care professional support: pilot randomized controlled trial N.B. https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/eco/outputs.aspx
BEEP Barrier Enhancement for Eczema Prevention – A randomised controlled trial	NIHR Health Technology Assessment £1,942,518	Daily Emollient During Infancy for Prevention of Eczema: The Beep Randomised Controlled Trial Emollients for prevention of atopic dermatitis; 5-year findings from the BEEP randomised trial N.B. https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/cebd/projects/1eczema/beep-maintrial.aspx
SPRUSD Setting Priorities and Reducing	NIHR Programme Grants for Applied Research	Final report





Uncertainty for people with Skin Disease	£1,930,186	A programme of research to set priorities and reduce uncertainties for the prevention and treatment of skin disease N.B. https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/cebd/projects/nihr-programme-grant.aspx
TREAT TREATment of severe Atopic eczema in children Trial – A multi-centre randomised controlled trial assessing the effectiveness, safety and cost-effectiveness of methotrexate vs. ciclosporin in the treatment of severe atopic eczema in children	NIHR Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation Programme £976,012	Study just completed, awaiting publication

Ongoing studies

1. BEst systemic treatments for adults with AtopiC eczema over the LONG term (BEACON platform trial): A randomised, assessor-blind trial comparing ciclosporin, methotrexate and dupilumab.
NIHR Health Technology Assessment
£1,899,851
Oct 2021 to Oct 2025
2. Trial of IGe tests for Eczema Relief (TIGER): A randomised controlled trial of test-guided dietary advice for children with eczema, with internal pilot and nested economic and process evaluations.
NIHR Health Technology Assessment
£1,937,166
Aug 2022 to Nov 2025
3. RAPID and Efficient Eczema Trials
NIHR Programme Grants for Applied Research
£2,492,655
Sep 2022 to Aug 2028
4. Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool for measuring eczema severity in all skin tones
£731,387
NIHR Invention for Innovation
Apr 2023 to Mar 2025
5. A qualitative study – lived experiences of Topical Corticosteroid Withdrawal (TSW) and navigating primary care with self-identified TSW





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6. NIHR School for Primary Care Research
£39,483
Apr 2023 to Dec 2023

Cochrane Reviews

1. [Skin care interventions in infants for preventing eczema and food allergy](#)
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2022
2. [Strategies for using topical corticosteroids in children and adults with eczema](#)
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2022
3. [Interventions to reduce Staphylococcus aureus in the management of eczema](#)
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2019
4. [House dust mite reduction and avoidance measures for treating eczema](#)
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2015
5. [Psychological and educational interventions for atopic eczema in children](#)
Cochrane Database of Library of Systematic Reviews 2014
6. [Chinese herbal medicine for atopic eczema](#)
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2013
7. [Dietary supplements for established atopic eczema](#)
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2012

Miscellaneous

1. There is now a core outcome set for AD that includes both a trials core set and a clinical practice core set of outcomes www.homeforeczema.org
[The HOME Core outcome set for clinical trials of atopic dermatitis](#)

