

## About the psychodermatology service

### What is psychodermatology?

Psychological factors such as stress have an effect on many skin disorders. Having a skin disorder can also affect your mood and behaviour. Psychological treatment can be helpful in both coping with and treating many skin disorders, either alone or in combination with conventional medications.

### What can I expect from the treatment?

The psychodermatology service provides support and therapy for people with skin disorders. Treatment is tailored to individual needs and will help people learn new ways of thinking and behaving, as well as reduce psychological symptoms such as stress, anxiety and depression, which in turn may be worsening a skin disease. Particular attention may be paid to:

- beliefs about appearance and attractiveness
- relationship between stress and skin disorder
- coping with skin disorder
- habits (eg itch/scratch)
- self-esteem
- relationships
- social interaction skills
- psychological distress (eg anxiety, depression)

### What sort of psychological treatment is offered?

We provide psychological assessment and treatment. Our service mostly uses a cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT) approach. This focuses on the present rather than the past; is for a fixed time; and is based on developing particular skills.

### Where will I be treated?

If you decide to proceed with psychological therapy you will see a psychologist in the dermatology unit in Clinic 6 at the Royal Free Hospital.

### How often will I need to attend and for how long?

Appointments are 50 minutes long and are usually weekly. Some patients only require one or two appointments with the psychologist; others need a course of treatment. Typically a course of treatment is 12 sessions.

### How can I be seen by the psychodermatology service?

Your dermatologist or specialist dermatology nurse can refer you to the service. You will be assessed within 4 weeks, but may then have to wait to start a course of treatment.

### What happens next?

Once the psychodermatology service has received a referral letter from your dermatologist or dermatology nurse, we will telephone you to offer an appointment.

### How can I contact the psychodermatology service?

You can contact the service during office hours.

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Tel: Direct dial: 0207 830 2376  
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