

Mr Simon Stevens
Chief Executive
NHS England



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Dear Simon,

RE: National Review on Prescriptions

We read with interest this week that NHSCC and NHS England are to review NHS funding for low priority prescription items. We understand that dermatology medicines and products, including sunscreen, are not included in the first phase list of categories.

We have, however, seen press reports claiming that sunscreen products may form part of a subsequent phase of categories subject to review.

While we fully understand the need to scrutinise NHS budgets and ensure cost savings where appropriate, the British Association of Dermatologists would strongly argue that sunscreens do not constitute a low priority prescription and would therefore not be appropriate for inclusion in the review process.

As the medical expert body for skin disease and producer of NICE accredited Clinical Guidelines, we advise that sunscreen prescribing is essential for certain groups of people with skin disease. We hope that any review, should it occur, would draw on the evidence and expertise of our organisation and its members, which we would gladly offer to you to assist in the process.

In particular, children suffering from xeroderma pigmentosum develop fatal skin cancer and die before their teenage years without sunscreens. Without sun protection, people with photosensitive diseases such as Gunther's disease, porphyria and lupus; may develop extensive skin disease causing hospitalisation, may require expensive drugs, and may suffer permanent, disfiguring facial scarring.

Sunscreen should be applied to those areas not normally covered by clothing (i.e. the hands, wrists, neck, ears and face) which requires six applications of 5ml (i.e. 30ml/day, 210 ml/week). For 500ml Sensense Ultra SPF 50, this equates to an annual cost of £450 per year. The Dundee reflectant sunscreen, required for the most severe photosensitive diseases, costs £4500 per year.

We urge that NHS England consider the views of patient groups, clinicians, commissioners and providers across the NHS.

We enclose below a list of diseases for which sunscreens should be prescribed. This information has also been circulated to our dermatology membership and relevant patient support groups:

I would be grateful for your acknowledgement of this letter regarding our clinical concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Nick Levell MD FRCP MBA
President
British Association of Dermatologists

Cc:

The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Secretary of State for Health
Dr Victoria Goulden, Chair, British Photodermatology Group
Dr George Moncrieff, Chair, The Dermatology Council for England
Dr Stephen Kownacki, Executive Chair, Primary Care Dermatology Society
Lynne Skrine, President, British Dermatological Nursing Group
Rachel Spalton, Chair of Trustees, The Vitiligo Society
Sandra Webb, Xeroderma Pigmentosum Support Group
Rakel Perez, Chair, Herpes Viruses Association
Chris Maker, Chief Executive Officer, Lupus UK

List of Diseases requiring Sunscreens

- Xeroderma Pigmentosum and other DNA repair disorders
- Cutaneous Porphyrias including Gunther's Disease
- Pseudoporphyria
- Polymorphic Light Eruption including Juvenile Spring Eruption
- Solar Urticaria
- Chronic Actinic Dermatitis
- Actinic Prurigo
- Hydroa Vacciniforme
- Photoaggravated/photosensitive eczema, psoriasis, rosacea, lichen planus, cutaneous lymphoma, pemphigus, Darier's Disease
- Drug photosensitivity
- Immunosuppressed patients including transplant patients
- Occulocutaneous albinism
- Vitiligo
- Chronic or Recurrent Herpes Labialis
- Actinic Folliculitis
- Photosensitive dermatoses - unclassified
- Cutaneous lupus erythematosus
- Systemic lupus erythematosus
- Dermatomyositis
- Photosensitivity post radiotherapy