Position statement on the prescribing of silk garments on GP FP10

Sunderland CCG do not support the prescribing of silk garments for patients with atopic skin conditions due to the lack of evidence of efficacy in line with guidance from NHS England.¹

Rationale

- Four brands of knitted silk garments are currently listed in the Drug Tariff: DermaSilk®, DreamSkin®, Skinnies® and Skintoskin®.² A wide range of products are available such as eye masks, socks, vests or pyjamas. Silk garments are used as an adjunctive treatment (to emollients and topical corticosteroids) of various forms of dermatitis, eczema and allergic skin conditions.³
- Manufacturers of silk clothing claim that less irritant than cotton clothing, protects the skin from moisture loss while remaining ‘breathable’ and may reduce excessive sweating.⁴⁻⁶
- Evidence to support prescribing of silk garments with atopic dermatitis/eczema is limited. A systematic review of silk garments in atopic dermatitis in 2012 concluded that the evidence of effectiveness is weak and of low quality.⁷
- The CLOTHES Trial was the first large, independent randomised controlled trial to evaluate silk garments for the management of eczema. The trial concluded that silk clothing is unlikely to provide additional benefit over standard care in children with moderate to severe eczema. An economic evaluation within the study suggested that these garments are unlikely to be cost-effective for health providers.⁸
- National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on treatment of atopic eczema in children (2007) made no recommendations about the use of such garments in the management of eczema.⁹

Recommendations for clinicians

- Avoid prescribing silk garments for patients. If patients wish to use silk garments, advise that these are available to buy directly from the manufacturers’ websites.
- Provide advice and treatment for atopic condition in-line with current guidelines.

References