



Press Release from Bournemouth University

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Bournemouth University helps improve quality of life for psoriasis sufferers

Skincare expert and Bournemouth University (BU) academic Professor Steven Ersser was recently invited to the House of Commons to present his initial findings of a study with adults who suffer from the long-term skin condition psoriasis.

Professor Ersser from the University's School of Health & Social Care was one of a selected group of researchers invited by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Medical Research to share his work and its importance to individual patients. He was joined by key stakeholders in the field include Sir Leszek Borysiewicz from the Medical Research Council, Professor Sir John Bell from the Academy of Medical Sciences and the chief executives of many UK research charities including Harpal Kumar from Cancer Research UK and Gladys Edwards from The Psoriasis Association.

The BU study, funded by The Psoriasis Association, is being undertaken by Professor Steven Ersser and Dr Fiona Cowdell in partnership with the University of Southampton, the Wessex Research Practice Collaboration and local NHS Primary Care Trusts. The project aims to explore self-management practices in adults with psoriasis and to design and pilot test an educational nursing intervention to support self-management practices.

So far, focus groups have revealed:

- Psoriasis sufferers experience a significant level of physical and psychosocial suffering which has a negative impact on their quality of life
- Sufferers have low expectations of health services and of the topical treatments available to them
- Sufferers tend to use their own methods of treatment which were often not consistent

Information from the focus groups, together with available literature, evidence and accounts of good practice, has been used to develop an intervention which is designed to help people to develop sufficient knowledge, skills and confidence. It will eventually include a workbook, a DVD supported by a grant from the Pedagogic Innovation Fund, an interactive session which features action planning and a follow-up consultation.

Professor Steven Ersser, who is also Director of the University's Centre for Wellbeing & Quality of Life, explained: "Current policy supports self management for people with long-term conditions including those with psoriasis but little is known about how they can be helped to self-manage as effectively as possible. This study aims to look how individuals are self-managing the condition and the support they receive from the health service."

At the event, Professor Sir John Bell, President of the Academy of Medical Sciences praised the work of researchers and doctors and how this research is directly helping patients. He said: "The UK's achievements as a leader in medical research should be celebrated. Investment in UK medical science has consistently provided research innovations that have a major impact on our healthcare."

Ends

Note to editors:

- (1) The All Party Parliamentary Group on Medical Research was established in December 2005 to provide an ongoing forum and network for Parliamentarians with an interest in medical research and the medical research sector.
- (2) The BU study into self-management in psoriasis was written by Professor Ersser and Dr Fiona Cowdell from the Centre for Wellbeing and Quality of Life, based in the University's School of Health & Social Care.
- (3) Psoriasis is a long-term, relapsing skin condition affecting up to 3% of the population at any one time.

For further media information or to interview Professor Steven Ersser or Dr Fiona Cowdell please contact Lucy McQuillin on tel: 01202 961037 or email: lmcquillin@bournemouth.ac.uk

Further information about the School of Health & Social Care can be found at: www.bournemouth.ac.uk/hsc