



Eczema: What Really Works (the treatments and therapies that really work)

Carolyn Charman, Sandra Lawton. Published by [Constable & Robinson Ltd](#) (London), 2006. ISBN 1845290712. Contains 215 pages. Price GBP9.99

It is rewarding to be asked to review a book that I will be able to thoroughly recommend to patients. There is a profusion of well-intended but erroneous information about eczema in the community, and this book provides a practical, balanced, and evidence-based guide for patients and their parents.

The emphasis of the book is on atopic eczema in children as this disease forms a large proportion of clinical work, although mention is made of the other types of eczema. It is written mostly in a question and answer style.

The authors are a consultant dermatologist and a specialist dermatology nurse. Together they have covered the breadth and depth of eczema answering the “frequently asked questions” in an easily readable style with language that avoids medical jargon. There is a useful glossary at the back. The 14 chapters cover the pathogenesis, investigation, and both orthodox and alternative treatments. The final three chapters focus on school, social life, leisure, and importantly the psychosocial impact of eczema.

The book is up-to-date and with a chapter devoted to topical immunomodulators. The 2005 FDA black box warning about topical pimecrolimus and tacrolimus is not discussed, however. The authors work in the United Kingdom, and whilst both generic and commercial drug names are used, a number of the drugs mentioned are not available in New Zealand. The comprehensive resource section at the end only lists UK-based organisations.

This is a good book filling an important need. I suggest recommending it to enquiring, motivated families and patients who want good quality information, particularly if they have atopic eczema. My reviewer’s copy is just about to be donated to one such family!

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