

Common Skin Disease A Mystery

Psoriasis is a common skin disorder. The incidence of psoriasis is frequently found in many parts of the world. The etiology of psoriasis remains unknown, but it usually occurs between 20 and 40 years of age. Apart from hereditary factor, environmental factors like bacterial infections, emotional disturbance, drug reaction, change of weather may also contribute to the disease. People with psoriasis have distinct patches of reddish skin covered by silvery white scales. These thickened patches frequently form on the scalp, elbows, knees and back. As the symptoms of psoriasis are apparent, patients often feel frustrated in work and social life and this leads to low self-esteem, psychological distress and social withdrawal.

There are 5 types of psoriasis, including plaque psoriasis, guttate psoriasis, pustular psoriasis, erythrodermic psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. More clinical evidence suggest that psoriasis tends to run in family. This disease may get worse when patients are under stress, little exposure to sunlight, over-stimulation of skin, maltreatment (e.g. over exposure to ultraviolet) etc.

The ways of treatment depend on the severity and type of psoriasis. Topical steroid is usually applied to mild cases of psoriasis, while phototherapy is suitable to moderate to severe psoriasis by applying controlled doses of ultraviolet to the skin. Recently, new medications are also widely used, including Vitamin A and Vitamin D derivatives. To prevent worsening of the skin condition, patients should maintain balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. Smoking and drinking alcohol should be avoided. Professional medical advice should be sought from medical practitioners before taking any medication.