

**Psoriasis patients from associations in different countries meet to discuss their needs and opinions about psoriasis treatments in an exciting new forum, InterPSO.**

**InterPSO:** The International Network of People with Psoriasis is a new psoriasis patient forum. It's aim is "to provide a forum for mutual and collective decision-making out of which can come a stronger voice for patients with psoriasis" says David Chandler, chairman of InterPSO, psoriatic patient and co-founder of the Psoriatic Arthropathy Alliance (PAA). **InterPSO** is a joint, international initiative between the PAA and Galderma Laboratories.

The presence of Galderma as an impartial observer creates a unique opportunity for patients to convey their needs directly to the pharmaceutical industry. The participants shared their experiences with regard to psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis with the patients from the other countries and also expressed their opinions concerning present and future treatments.

The first InterPSO meeting took place in Nice, earlier this year. Bringing together psoriasis association representatives and patients from the UK (PAA - Psoriatic Arthropathy Alliance), the Netherlands (PVN - Psoriasis Vereniging Nederland) and Germany (Deutscher Psoriasis Bund). Professor Ulrich Amon of the Psorisol centre in Hersbruck was also present.

Psoriasis is a chronic disease which cannot be cured at present. As a result, it can safely be said that for those who suffer from it and who need to follow life-long treatments, quality of life becomes of the utmost importance. The InterPSO meeting helped to raise the issue that current psoriasis treatments are often impractical, time-consuming and can be expensive, which results in a poor quality of life for the patients. It is widely felt among psoriasis patients that pharmaceutical companies and healthcare professionals do not understand nor take into account the importance and impact of treatments on quality of life and that there is a need to

better educate healthcare professionals about the disease and its therapies. One of the aims of InterPSO is, therefore, "to enable patients' views to be heard at an early stage in treatment development and so will lead, it is hoped, to new treatments based on patients' needs", says David Chandler.

The InterPSO meeting allowed patients to learn about and compare each other's experiences of living with psoriasis, both on a personal and cultural level. All agreed that there is much misunderstanding and misinformation about the disease resulting in stigma and discrimination, highlighting the need to raise awareness about the disease internationally. There was extensive discussion on treatments, both existing and future, topical and systemic and packaging and application.

**Overall consensus:-**

The attributes most looked for in a topical treatment:

- ◆ good efficacy
- ◆ low irritation
- ◆ low number of applications

Patients would like to see these attributes taken into account in the development of new therapies. This could help to improve their quality of life.

**Galderma, who is supporting the InterPSO meetings with an**

**educational grant**, was keen to find out from the patients precisely how they feel the pharmaceutical industry can help them. As Thierry Rollin, strategic marketing manager at Galderma, explains "I think it is key that we, who are responsible for the research and development of products, take patients' views into account as this can only help to lead to better adapted therapies".

Apart from finding a cure, it was agreed that the industry can help :-

- ◆ By listening to and understanding the end user of their products, in order to develop more realistic treatment regimens.
- ◆ By helping patients' associations to produce more information for patients.

Perhaps most importantly in the short-term, however, patients would like the pharmaceutical industry to ensure that the information in patient leaflets is accessible to all:-

- ◆ Easy to understand
- ◆ Explaining all possible side effects
- ◆ To include details of further sources of information

"In working together on the development of InterPSO, the PAA and Galderma see their key role as working with patients for patients in partnership with industry", explains David Chandler. The next InterPSO meeting is due to be held next year when representatives of other associations will be invited to attend.

