

skin | psoriasis and the esthetician

by Rob and Carol Trow

A diagnosis of psoriasis often sends clients running to their dermatologist or skin care professional at breakneck speed. While it is not a life threatening condition, it causes great emotional pain and discomfort for close to eight million Americans. Worldwide, the numbers are more staggering: 125 million people have this skin condition. That equates to 2 to 3 percent of the earth's population. A compounding factor is that somewhere between 10 and 30 percent of those who have psoriasis develop psoriatic arthritis, a much more troubling condition. Remember, psoriasis is not only a cosmetic problem but a medical condition.

On the bright side

After years of either nonfunding or insignificant support, the United States Congress passed legislation supporting the expansion of governmentally funded psoriasis research. It is now up to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop and implement a plan to translate this appropriation into a course of action that includes new initiatives at finding a cure and treatment for those suffering from this disease and the arthritic condition that follows.

Recently the NIH awarded a \$6.37 million grant to Case Western Reserve University Medical School and University Hospitals Case Medical Center to find new treatments for psoriasis. This is in addition to the previously awarded \$5 million by the Joy and Thomas G. Murdough Foundation for similar research. Over 80 percent of all people affected by psoriasis

are very dissatisfied with the treatment options available. If you treat someone with this condition do not promise to heal the ailment and make sure he/she sees a dermatologist as well.

The research says

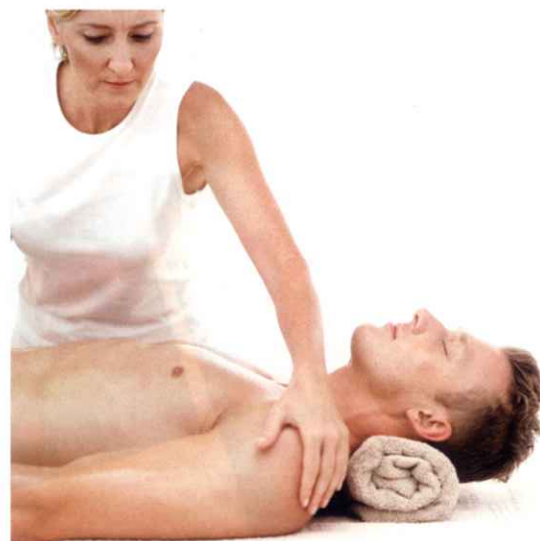
The *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* published three articles on the results of double blind studies centered on psoriasis. They found that 40 percent of study participants were

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currently not receiving treatment for their condition. Income and employment are negatively impacted among patients with severe psoriasis, and initial treatments can create a placebo effect. Therefore you may come across clients who may not even be aware of their condition and may not be taking steps to improve it.

What to do

As industry professionals we are challenged when faced with a client who has psoriasis. There are several basic facts that you and your colleagues should know about this skin disease. It is not contagious—you can not catch it or pass it on to others. Its origins are genetic, resulting



from an immune related cause. You will most likely see the condition as inflamed, scaly patches on the skin. These patches do not fall off as they do in other skin conditions but build up quickly, causing the formation of unsightly lesions.

There are many treatment options for psoriasis—what may work for one person may not aid another. Since there are many forms of psoriasis some treatments work for a while and then stop being effective.

Hang in there—provide your clients with the best skin care treatments you can offer while encouraging them to continually visit a dermatologist. ■

Rob and Carol Trow, his wife, own *DermaConcepts USA*, the eastern U.S. (excluding metro NYC) distributors for *Environ® Skin Care*. Rob has been in the skin care field for more than ten years and, alone and along with Carol, has authored multiple articles for trade publications.