

MEDIA RELEASE

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PAGB response to BMJ trial on emollient bath additives

John Smith, PAGB Chief Executive, comments: “We welcome any new research* on over-the-counter (OTC) medicines. However, it is important to note that this trial did not look at the use of bath additives in isolation and the authors themselves acknowledge that they cannot rule out the possibility that bath additives can offer benefits to children when used more than five times a week. The trial also did not look at the effectiveness of these products in children under five with eczema.

“Eczema can be a debilitating condition and have a substantial impact on patients’ and families’ quality of life. It can be distressing for any parent to see their child in discomfort. The National Institute for Health and Care Effectiveness (NICE) guidance currently recommends the regular use of emollient wash products for children with eczema as part of a treatment regime, to help reduce symptoms and make children feel more comfortable. However, if bath emollients are used, it is essential that they are used in addition to, not instead of emollient creams.

“It is also reassuring to hear that this study found evidence that leave-on emollients and soap substitutes used to treat eczema were effective in reducing inflammation and irritation, highlighting further the benefits these products can offer patients.

“Parents should not be concerned by the results of this study and should feel confident in continuing to use emollient bath additives as part of their child’s treatment regime. However, we would advise anyone concerned about the use of these medicines to speak to their pharmacist. Pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals and can provide information and advice on over-the-counter medicines.”

**A British Medical Journal report, on a study carried out by researchers at the University of Southampton, has suggested that emollient bath additives have no clinical benefit in the standard management of eczema in children.*

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Notes to editors:

PAGB (Proprietary Association of Great Britain) is the UK trade association representing manufacturers of branded over-the-counter medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements.

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