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Nottingham

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Supporting Self-Management of Eczema Through Research

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Conflicts of interest: part of the research teams for the projects discussed, member of the Harmonising Outcome Measures for Eczema (HOME) initiative



What I will talk about today

- Our recent eczema research making a difference for people self-managing their eczema



Eczema Care
Online

- Impact of Eczema Care Online – self-management toolkit



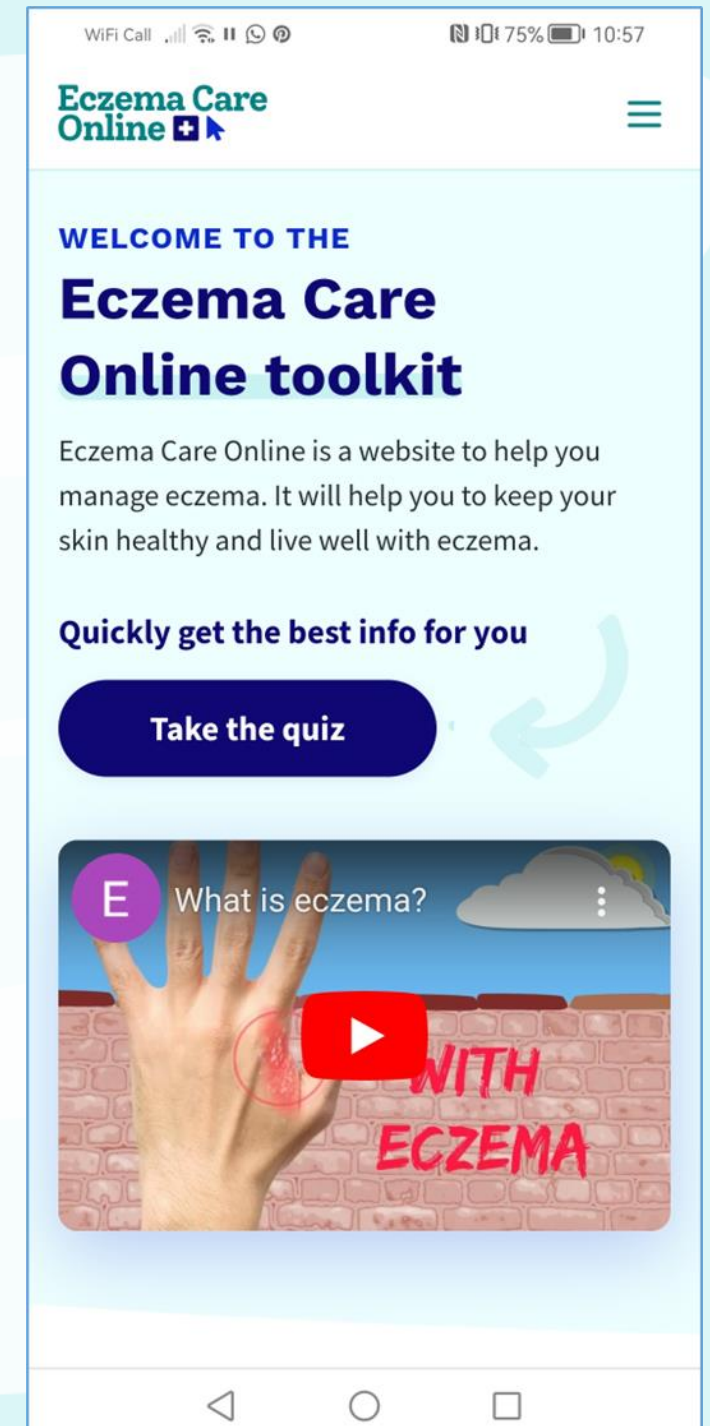
- Rapid Eczema Trials – citizen science project, co-designing trials with patients



- Tracking of eczema to support self-management - EczemaNet / My Eczema Tracker

What is in Eczema Care Online?

- Support effective eczema management through
 - Improved use of topical corticosteroids for flare-ups
= flare control creams
 - Regular emollients to prevent flare-ups
= moisturising creams
 - Improved management of irritants and triggers





Key features of Eczema Care Online

www.EczemaCareOnline.org.uk

- Free, no registration
- Evidence-based, behaviour change intervention
- Suitable for children and adults
- **Two RCTs shown improved eczema symptoms and reduced healthcare costs**



BMJ 2022 ; 379 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj-2022-072007>

www.EczemaCareOnline.org.uk – routes to implementation

- Eczema charities
 - National Eczema Society
 - Eczema Outreach Support
- Clinical practice
 - Primary care electronic systems
 - GP and pharmacy training modules (Red Whale, NB Hot Topics)
 - Secondary care – advice & guidance templates
 - National Guidelines
- Social media
 - Advertising on Facebook, Instagram, Google

Being
accessed all
over the
world...over
100,00 visitors

Visitor Map

105,499 visits



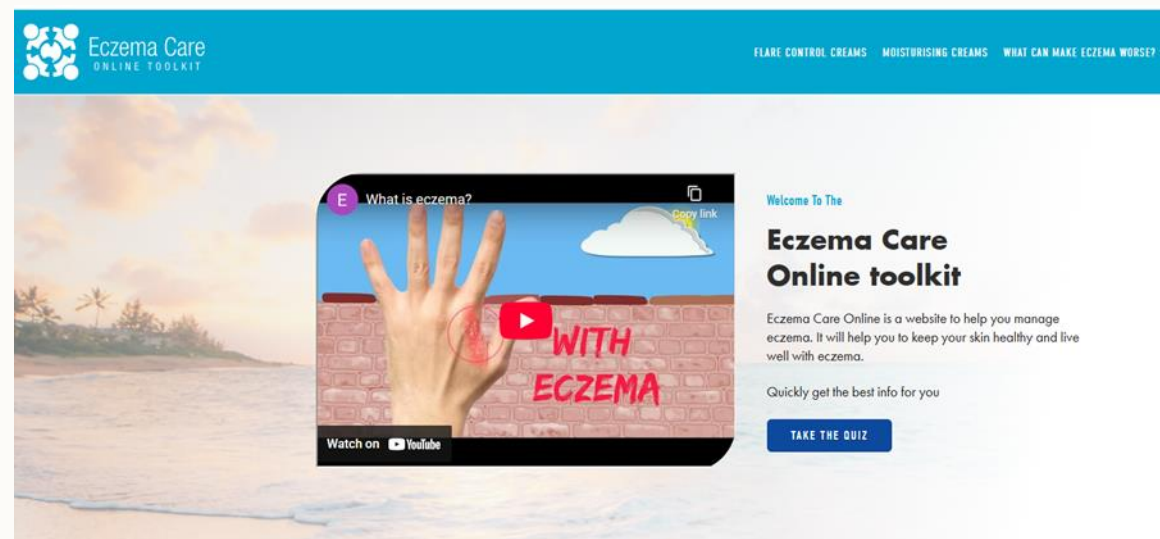


Impact in Australia Feb 2024 to Sept 2025

- 11,682 unique users navigated from Eczema Support Australia website to Eczema Care Online toolkit.
- High demand for practical guides and care plan resources
- **Integrated with the Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) Eczema Program**
 - government-funded initiative aimed at improving primary care management of eczema.

Eczema Support Australia

<https://www.eczemasupport.org.au/eczema-care-online/>

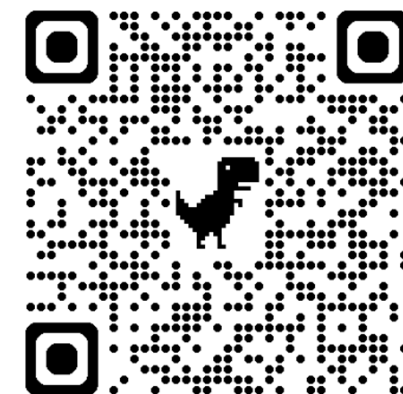




Happy to share and avoid duplicated effort

- ECO development took 2 years – based on theory and latest evidence
 - Over 100 people with lived experience of eczema
- Currently working with colleagues in The Netherlands, Sweden and France – would love to work with others to make available in your countries too
- Resources can be tailored to local country's needs to be most effective

All publications here



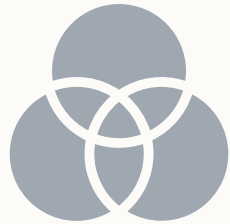
What is the Rapid Eczema Trials project?



Building an eczema citizen-science community
to prioritise, design and run online clinical trials about the self-management of
eczema and to share knowledge widely

5-year project (NIHR Programme Grant for Applied Health Research)

So what is so special about the Rapid Eczema Trials Project?



Multiple, efficient trials

Each learning from the one before
Master protocol for all trials



Community of people interested in what we are doing

Each contributing in a way that works
for them



Eczema Priority Setting Partnership (2012)

Identified FIVE priorities for **patients**

- What is the best psychological treatment for itching/scratching in eczema?
- Which is the best way for people with eczema to wash?
- What are the best and safest natural products to apply to the skin for eczema?
- How much does avoidance of irritants and allergens help people with eczema?
- What is the role of diet in treating eczema





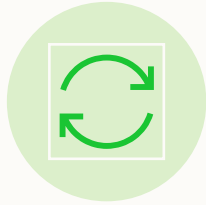
Our first Rapid Eczema Trial.....

- Which is the best way for people with eczema to wash?

Co-designed with the eczema community



Prioritization



Intervention
Development



Trial
Development



9 months to
create



13 online
meetings



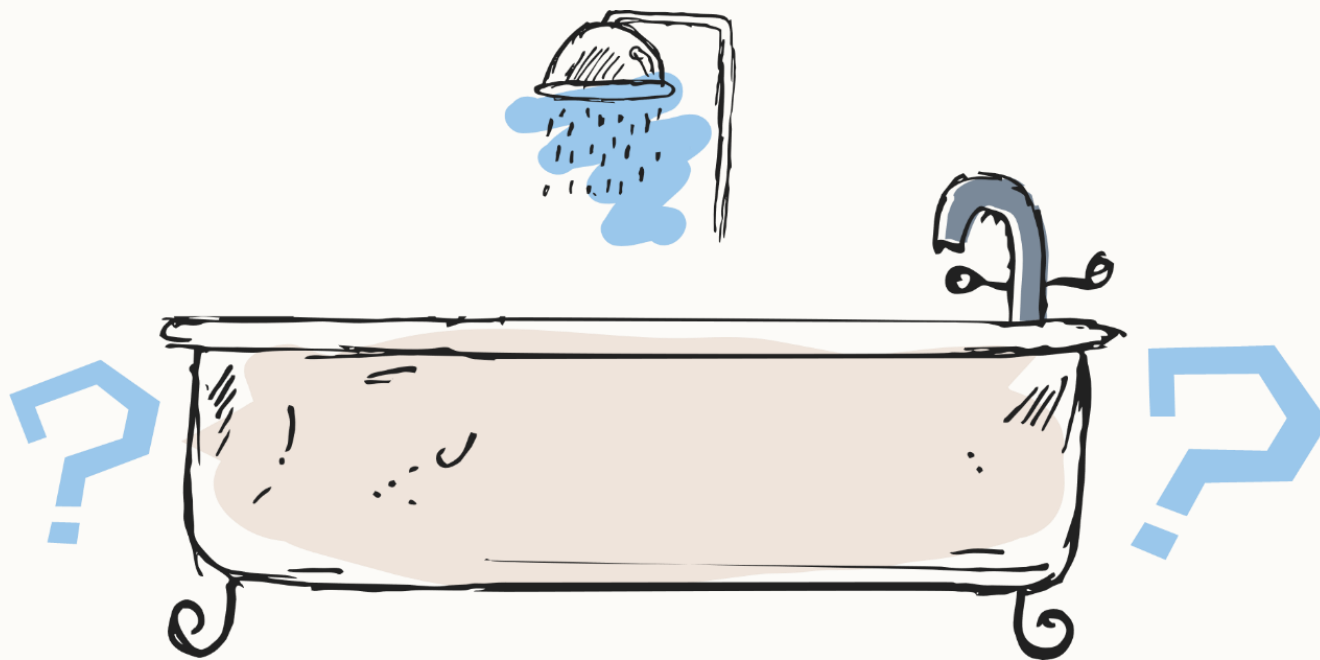
2 community
surveys





Our Research Question

Does **weekly** bathing improve **eczema symptoms** compared to **daily** bathing for **people with eczema** over 4 weeks?



- Recruited 438 participants
- Aged 1 year and older
- Online trial

See poster #1025 [Sunday: Booth A, poster session 4]

Views from our Citizen Scientists



“It feels like I'm finally part of a group of people trying to make things better”

Citizen Scientist



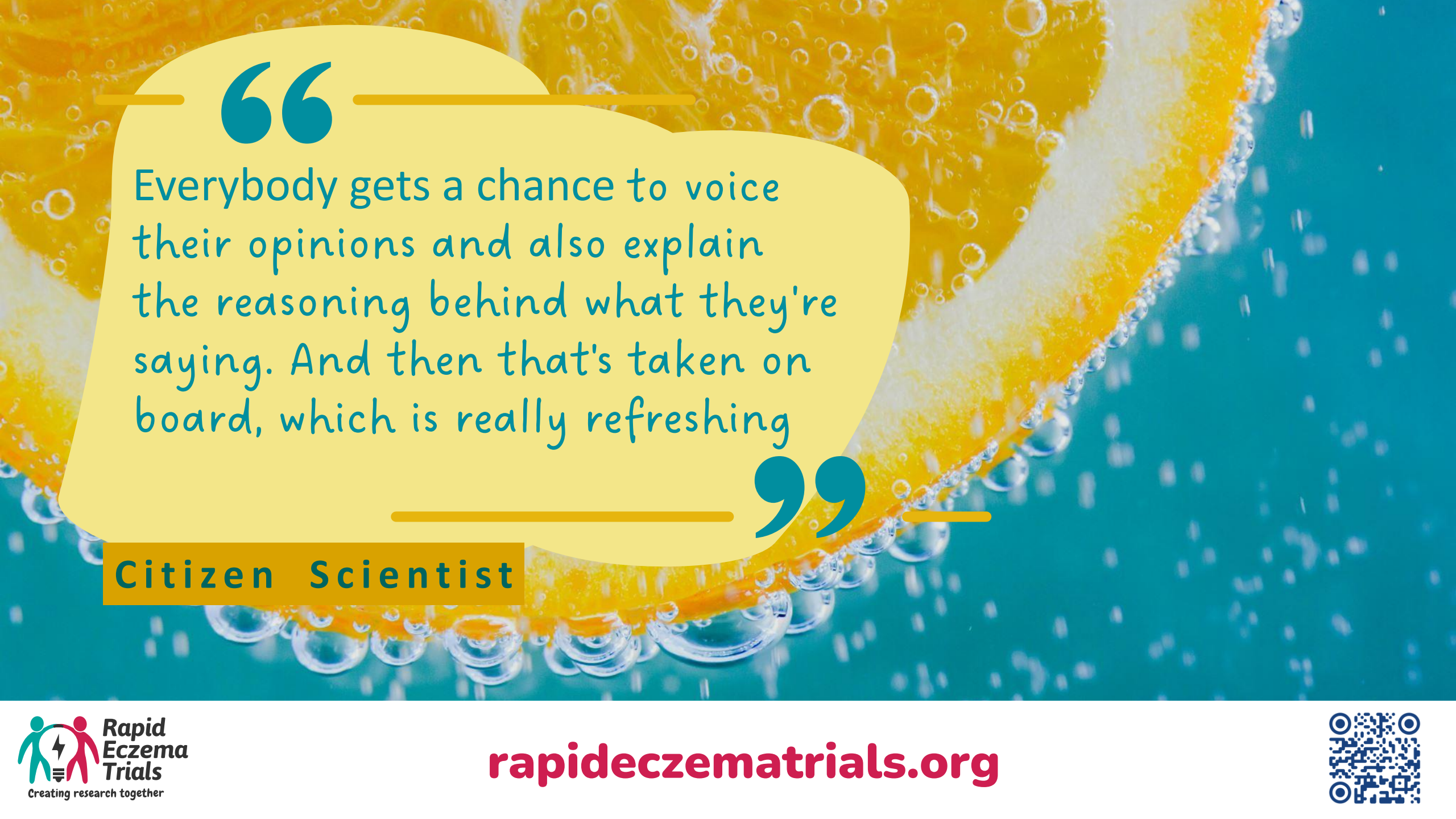
“

[It's] very good to see that those doing research **really care** about what will be useful to people with eczema.

Citizen
Scientist

”



A vibrant background image featuring a cross-section of a lemon slice floating in water, surrounded by numerous clear, shimmering bubbles. The lemon's bright yellow-orange segments and white pith are visible, contrasting with the deep blue water.

“

Everybody gets a chance to voice their opinions and also explain the reasoning behind what they're saying. And then that's taken on board, which is really refreshing

”

Citizen Scientist





Coming next

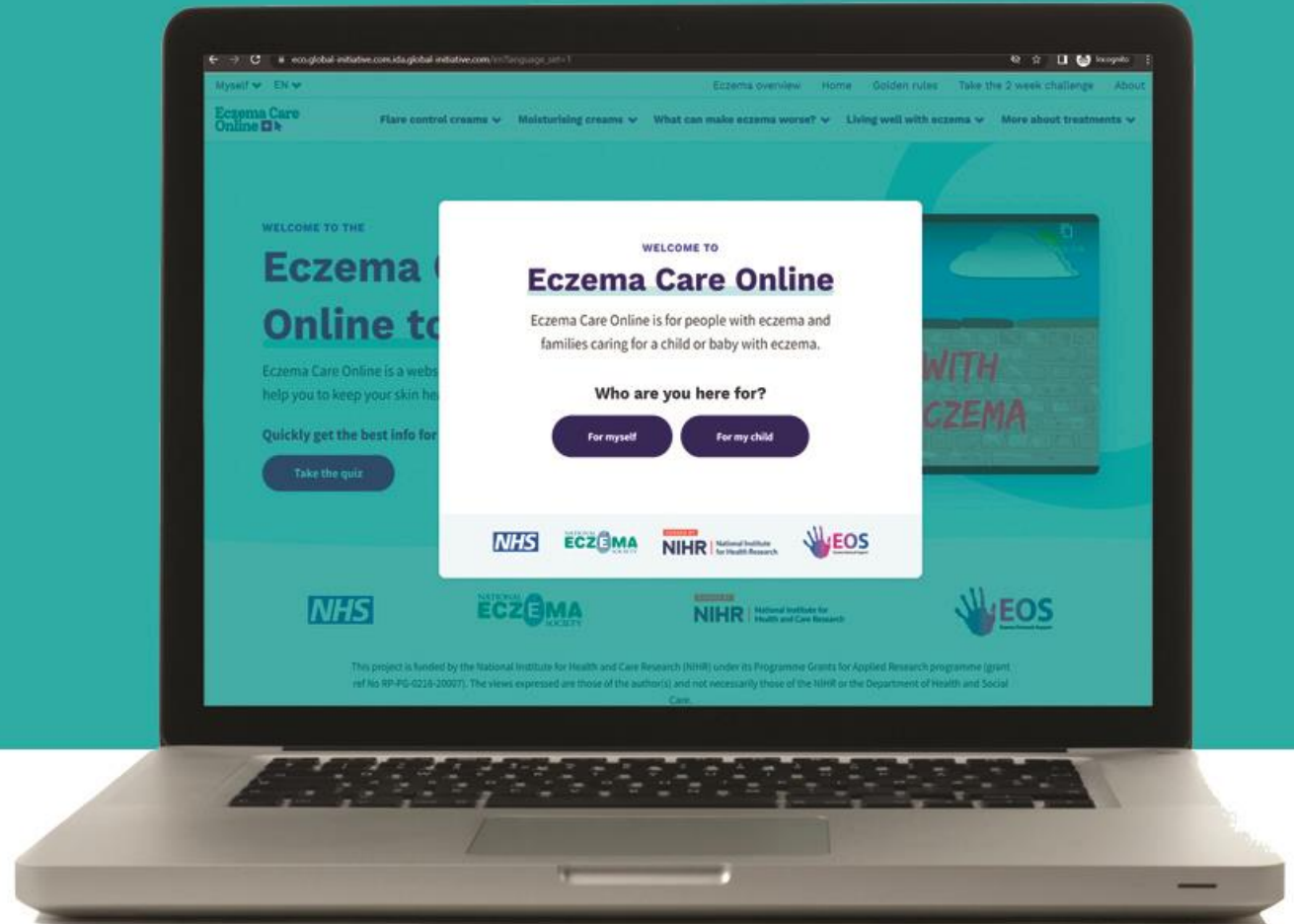
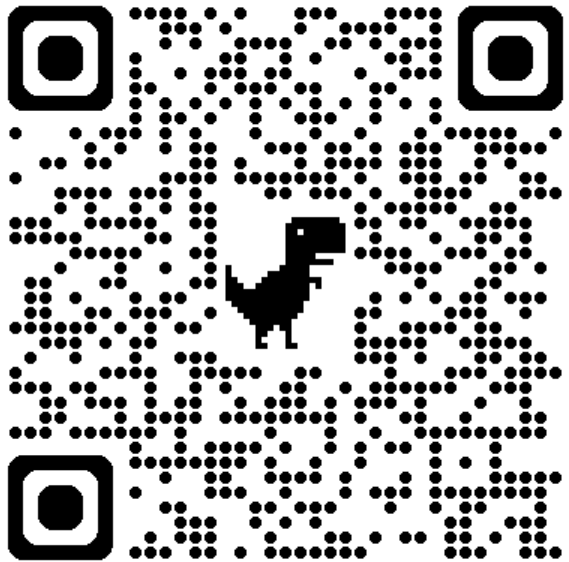
www.RapidEczemaTrials.org



- Does giving advice to **treat for 2 days after the eczema looks and feels clear** improve eczema control compared to normal care (no specific advice)
- 4-month study
- Now recruiting – adults and children

- Does a 3-week online programme to break **the itch-scratch cycle** improve eczema symptoms compared to usual care?
- 4-month study
- Two RCTs – one in children, one in adults
- In set-up (starting 2026)

Everything you need to know to live well with eczema.



EczemaCareOnline.org.uk



Why this is important

- There will always be more questions than answers for people living with eczema
- Patients are often given “well meaning” but conflicting advice due to lack of evidence
 - Erodes trust in healthcare professionals
 - Causes confusion and frustration
 - Promotes to spread of misinformation



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Time to get involved ...

Milk avoidance

- Aaron Drucker *et. al.*
- Using Rapid Eczema Trials methods to develop an online RCT in Canada / USA
- Aiming to start 2026

Avoidance of triggers

- Danielle Paea *et. al.* (2025) *Australian J of Dermatol* (*Melbourne*)
- Eczema Triggers Identification Questionnaire
- Simple, low-cost intervention



A new dawn for patient-focussed eczema trials

www.RapidEczemaTrials.org



Kim.Thomas@nottingham.ac.uk



- Running eczema trials in low- and middle-income countries?
- Running trials in other chronic health conditions eg asthma?





Eczema Tracking to support self-management

- Low tech and high-tech solutions
 - EczemaNet – uses AI to assess severity from photos
 - My Eczema Tracker - validated questionnaires (POEM and RECAP)



EczemaNet

Improved remote assessment of eczema severity

EczemaNet uses AI technology to reliably assess eczema severity in all skin tones using uploaded photos

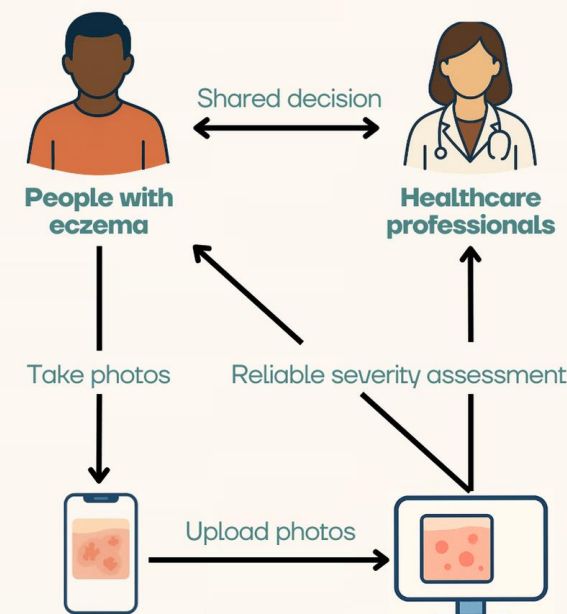
With EczemaNet

people with eczema can

- monitor changes in eczema severity at home
- inform your healthcare provider more effectively about the severity of eczema
- plan the most appropriate treatment more easily

healthcare professionals can

- obtain key information for monitoring eczema severity that can aid shared decision making with patient on a treatment plan
- decide whether specialist referral is needed
- potentially reduce the number of repeat face-to-face appointments



Find out more



eczemanet.co.uk



Eczema Monitoring Online Trial



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Eczema Monitoring Online (EMO)

[Eczema Monitoring Online \(EMO\)](#)

[What is EMO?](#)

[Taking Part](#)

[Meet the Team](#)

Welcome to the EMO study



EMO is a fully online research study looking at how eczema changes over time and how people manage their eczema remotely.

- Online trial with 296 people with eczema randomised to:
 - weekly completion of POEM (7 questions about eczema symptoms)
 - Completion of POEM at baseline and week 8 only



Results

- Found a small but significant difference in eczema symptoms for those who had completed the weekly symptom questionnaires (POEM) compared to usual care
- Average difference between the groups = 1.64 points (95% confidence interval 2.91 to 0.38 points)
 - Small difference, but this is a very simple, self-management intervention



My Eczema tracker



- App for tracking eczema over time
- Includes:
 - Eczema Symptoms (POEM)
 - Eczema Control (Recap)
 - Notes to record treatments and triggers
- Free and no registration needed
- Data remain on personal phone – but can be downloaded and shared with healthcare providers

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/cebd/resources/my-eczema-tracker-app.aspx> - includes short video to explain My Eczema Tracker



EczemaNet

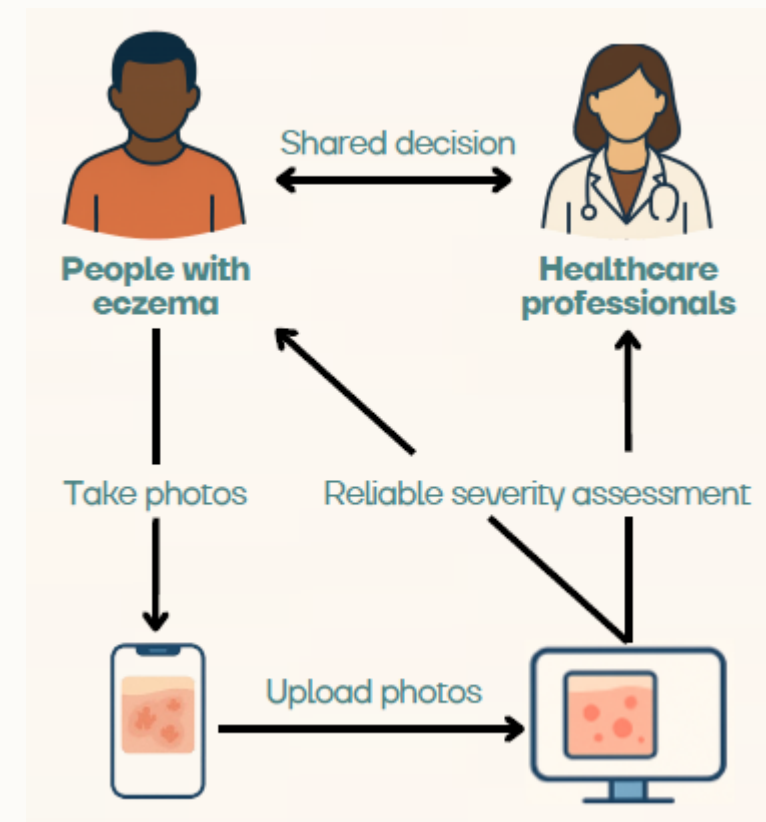


- AI tool to assess eczema severity from photographs
- Built to be suitable for all skin tones
- Helps patients to understand when to use eczema treatments
- Aids communication between:
 - Patients and healthcare professionals
 - Primary care and secondary care health professionals

Find out more



eczemanet.co.uk





What I have covered....

- Three research projects all supporting people to 'live better with eczema'
- All have strong patient input throughout the research journey
- All are making an impact on people's lives
- Really happy to share resources and expertise

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Funding & partners

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The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NIHR of the Department of Health and Social Care.



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Eczema Support Organisations



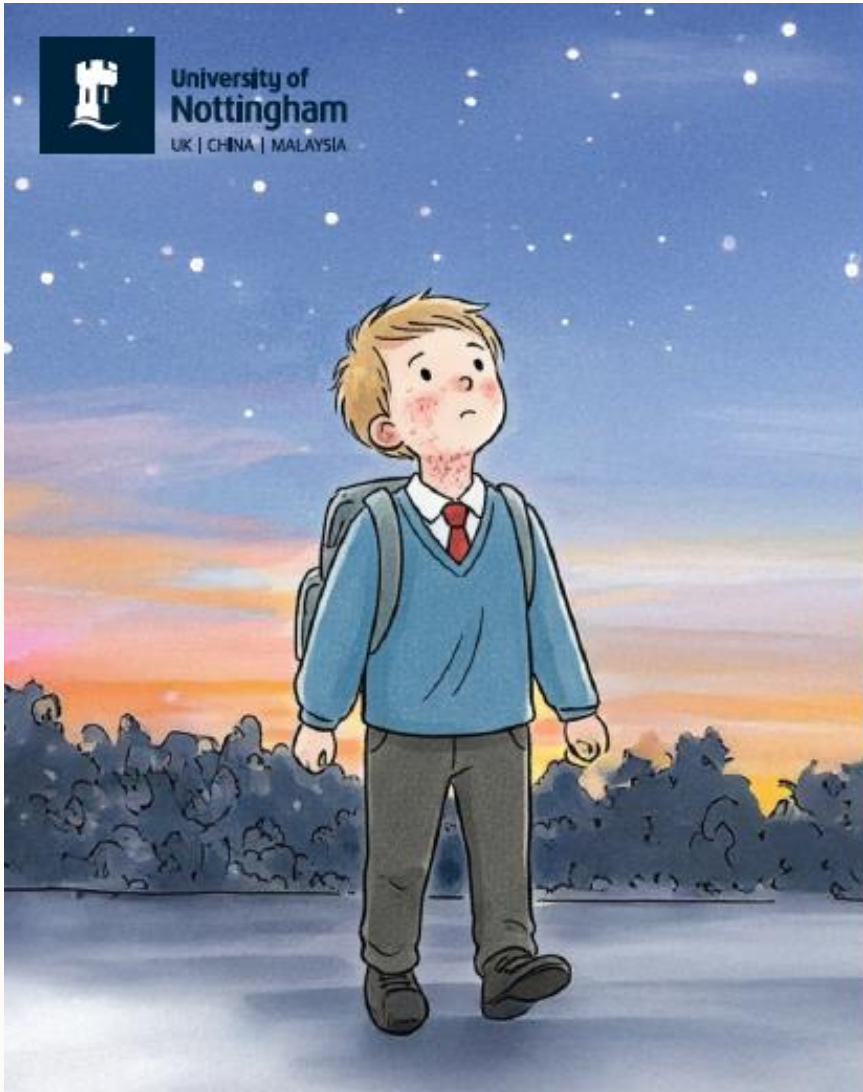
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National Institute for
Health and Care Research



A short story about the impact of eczema...



Eczema & Kindness