

A spot of bother

A multidisciplinary team of researchers from the University and Leeds has been awarded £433,000 by the NHS Research and Development Health Technology Assessment programme to look in depth at a skin complaint that affects between 20 and 30 per cent of 15–25 year-olds in the country — acne.

This is the first major award to be given solely to the study of a dermatological problem. The project, which started in August, will evaluate the use of antibiotics in mild to moderate acne in the community. For the purpose of the study, mild to moderate acne is defined as pimples sufficient to seek medical help from a general practitioner.

The team includes Dr Hywel Williams (Medicine and Health Sciences — Dermatology), Professor Mike Pringle (Medicine and Health Sciences — General Practice), Professor Alain Li

Wan Po (Pharmaceutical Sciences — Clinical Pharmaceuticals) and Dr Dave Whynes (Economics — Health Economics) from Nottingham and Dr Anne Eady (Microbiology) and Professor Bill Cunliffe (Dermatology), Leeds.

Difficult decisions

To date, no one has looked at the comparative effectiveness of the many antibiotic products available for use in this condition. GPs are faced with difficult decisions when trying to work out the best treatments for their patients.

The main focus of the three-year study will be to try and establish which products are the most effective and cost effective in treating acne and more about the pattern of bacterial resistance to the antibiotics that are used. The overall aim is to

establish national guidelines for the management of acne in the community.

The trial will be a community-based randomised controlled clinical trial recruiting 1,200 patients from GP practices in the Leeds and Nottingham areas. All patients will be randomly allocated one of 11 different treatment schemes. Each scheme includes a cream and a tablet.

Dr Williams explains one of the major differences about this trial. He says: “Unlike many other clinical trials, we will be placing emphasis on how our patients feel about their acne both before and after treatment. We will, of course, also be looking at more objective outcome measures like the number of inflammatory spots and facial redness and will take pre- and post-treatment pictures to help in our evaluation of the treatment methods.”



Flower power

University grounds staff are celebrating after helping Nottingham to win the overall Britain in Bloom large city trophy for 1997.

And the team came third in the overall city winners for Nottingham — they were pipped to the post by Wollaton Post Office and

Nottingham Hospice. Pictured above are: Simon Robinson, Michael Wroblewski and Ray Sturman. The city will now go forward next year to Europe's Entente Floral.

“It's nice to know that we at the University did our bit to help with that success,” said Grounds Superintendent Ian Cooke.

TQA success

The Department of Urban Planning has scored 23 out of a possible 24 marks in the latest Teaching Quality Assessment. The marks were: curriculum design content and organisation — 4; teaching learning and assessment — 3; student progression and achievement — 4; student support and guidance — 4; learning resources — 4; and quality assurance and enhancement — 4. “Yet another fantastic result for a Nottingham department,” said Director of Teaching Enhancement Alan Howe.

Crab appeal

Four members of the security staff at the University of Birmingham are undertaking a charity bicycle ride from Plymouth to Aberdeen in aid of the CRAB (Cancer Research at Birmingham) appeal, calling at other universities on the way. They will call at Nottingham on November 3–4, and are appealing to staff and students to support them with donations. Money can be handed to the participants on the ride or cheques made out to the Cancer Research Campaign sent to: K Whitehouse/E Cox, Security Section, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham.