The Guideline on Eczema published by the Dutch College of General Practitioners (NHG) provides clear recommendations for diagnosing and treating various forms of eczema. It emphasises the importance of using indifferent (i.e. ineffective but harmless) agents. Although there is little or no evidence for their efficacy, they are recommended on the basis of experience. The guideline also discusses in detail the correct use of topical corticosteroids, to prevent both overtreatment and undertreatment. An important recommendation for general practice is that no long-term repeat prescriptions should be supplied by the practice nurse. Pharmacies offer a range of patient education materials on the recommended dosage (in terms of finger tip units). The elaborate classification of eczema types has not yet led to a diagnosis-specific drug treatment. The recommendation to prescribe sedative antihistamines for short periods and only for night-time use is not based on research evidence, is off-label and should be discouraged in view of the risk of side-effects (e.g. sudden infant death syndrome after use of promethazine in babies and young children). Although this recommendation is qualified in footnotes in the guidelines as published in the Huisarts en Wetenschap journal, these notes are unfortunately not included in the publication in HW.

References*

11. KNMP kennisbank, via KNMPKennisbank Online.

*The literature refers to the Dutch text