



Eczema research gives Methven world beating advantage

NZ bathroom fittings company, Methven, finally has proof their Maia showerhead can improve people's eczema – a claim nobody else in the world can make. The showerhead was tested on eczema patients by Clinicanz doctors and the results were reported in the *New Zealand Medical Journal* and on TV. After announcing it to the stock exchange, their share price rose 12.5% in the month following.



<http://www.nzma.org.nz/journal/>

Clinicanz Medical Director, Dr Shaun Holt says Methven did what every healthcare company should. They took a series of 'best guesses' and patient feedback to the next level of definitive scientific proof. Consumers have become highly educated and stories from friends and relatives are no longer sufficient. Companies must be able to back their claims with scientific evidence. Methven have set the benchmark for evidence in theirs and the wider natural health industry.

The problem – eczema treatment costs \$364 million, causes significant ill-health and there is no cure.

Eczema (also called atopic dermatitis) is a common skin disease. The clinical features include itching, redness and scaling of the skin which can dramatically affect the quality of life of the sufferer. Eczema is usually treated with topical corticosteroids, but there can be side effects with their use, particularly if used long term, or in high doses.

Eczema may be severe and widespread, leading to significant feeling of ill-health and possible social isolation. One study revealed the cost of treatment to be as high as \$364 million in New Zealand.

Some patients with eczema develop dry skin or cracked open skin wounds with frequent swimming in public pools or after bathing. Studies have shown that eczema patients can be more sensitive to chlorine exposure which may play a role in the development or worsening of the condition.



Methven's approach – developing the Maia

Methven developed the Maia showerhead to reduce chlorine exposure for people taking showers. Normal 'town supply' water contains chlorine to limit bacterial growth and it was proposed this may be having an adverse effect on people with eczema.

The Maia showerhead has a removable cartridge in the stem of the unit which contains Vitamin C (ascorbic acid), a compound known to remove chlorine from

water. After flowing through the Vitamin C containing cartridge the water delivered through the showerhead contains a much lower level of chlorine.

Methven received many reports from individuals saying their eczema had improved. Rather than accept these stories Methven decided to test the hypotheses and invest in a high quality clinical study through Clinicanz.

THE STUDY

Title: A randomised, double-blind, controlled, crossover, pilot study of the efficacy of a vitamin C containing showerhead on symptoms of eczema.

Details: 12 eczema patients were selected by Clinicanz doctors and agreed to participate in the study – the study was developed as a 'pilot' study ie a small low-cost study which could provide an indication of whether the showerhead worked (a larger study would provide more definitive results). Each patient was supplied with a showerhead to use for one month. After one month, they returned and were given a second showerhead for another month. Neither the patient, nor the investigating doctor were aware of which contained the active Vitamin C cartridge but every patient had one month with active ingredient and a second without (placebo). Only the Clinicanz Medical Director had access to the randomly assigned details of which was active.

At each visit, the patient's eczema was assessed using an internationally recognised scoring system.

Results: The results were positive for the showerhead. Although the international questionnaire results did not provide a clear result, patients self-reported their general skin health and this assessment was confirmed by the administering doctor. Of the 12 participants, half said they had a better result with the Vitamin C cartridge as opposed to only 2 who said the placebo cartridge was better (the remaining four reported no change).

The results provide a good indication the Vitamin C cartridge was making a difference for patients.

Media announcement – Clinicanz go further than any other research unit

As well as undertaking research, Clinicanz go out of their way to help clients get the best from their investment. The Methven study was submitted to and published in the *New Zealand Medical Journal*. Clinicanz also assisted in creating a news-worthy announcement for medical and mainstream media. Most importantly, Clinicanz Medical Director Dr Shaun Holt, used his regular slot on TV One Breakfast to tell the 300,000 viewers all about it! You won't get that type of service from any other clinical trial unit in New Zealand or probably the world.



A Final word from Methven

Methven General Manager, HomeSpa division Nicky Dunn says the research has put the company a step ahead of the competition. *"In a competitive market, the research results give us a unique selling point needed to position Methven as a premium supplier of high quality bathroom finishings. Our ability to make justifiable medical claims makes a huge difference for our international business where regulation requires high quality proof."*

"Clinicanz created and ran a quick and effective project and reported the results as soon as the last patient visit was completed. They went further than other research companies would, working with Methven to announce the findings and inform the general public about its potential and using their own contacts to expand our reach."

