



*Is there a system of support for patients suffering from atopic dermatitis
in Poland in the field of health education?*

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Introduction

- Joanna Małaczyńska-Rentfleisz, Director & Member of the Board.
- Sport For Health Foundation was established in 2011.
- Since the beginning of its activity, it has been focused on the problems of patients with atopic dermatitis.
- We run the rehabilitation center dedicated, among other, to patients with atopic dermatitis, where we combine education, sport and rehabilitation in the brine pools.



Atopic dermatitis

.... it's not only a disease but also the social problem

exacerbations of the disease causing the performance of daily activities

absences from work and school

reduction of physical activity

depression affecting about half of sufferers

disturbed family relations

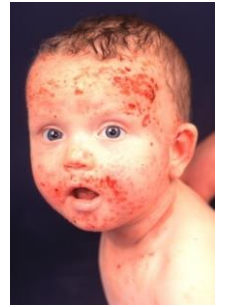
expensive treatment

long waiting time for medical appointments



The challenges

The public health system is not efficient enough to deal with these problems



Increasing number of patients

App. 10% - 15 % of children in Poland suffer from atopic dermatitis (about 1 million)

App. 1% - 3 % of adults in Poland suffer from atopic dermatitis (about half a million)



Decreasing number of doctors

Number of allergy specialist in Poland - app. 1500

Number of dermatology specialist in Poland - app. 2500

The challenges

- The average number of first and follow-up visits should be:
 - among children up to 6 years of age min. 6 visits per year,
 - among children over 6 years of age and adults, 4 visits per year
- The average time of the visit (expected by national health fund) - 10-15 minutes
- The average waiting time for an appointment is 60 days



Support actions

- In accordance with the applicable guidelines of the Polish Society of Allergology and Dermatology, in addition to medical care, health-promoting education in the broadest sense is extremely important.
- Some needs and problems of patients could and should be addressed by patients' organizations, which at the same time should be a partner in the search for systemic solutions.
- In Poland, there are several patient organizations that try to fulfill this role in cooperation with doctors
- One of the best places for patients to learn about their disease is to attend atopy schools



Atopy School

- In 2005, the first atopy schools were established in Poland aiming to educate patients and their families not only how to manage the disease but also related problems. However, these are all "incidental" actions, not systemic ones.
- Objectives of the atopy school:
 - ✓ reducing the time of the first visit
 - ✓ fewer medical interventions
 - ✓ fewer hospitalizations
 - ✓ improved quality of life
 - ✓ Less absenteeism from school and work
 - ✓ reduced treatment costs
- According to our data, patients expect atopy schools to include advice from a dermatologist, allergist, dietician, psychologist and nurse.



How can we contribute and work better together??

- Create a roadmap for patients and their families from the very moment of diagnosis
- The roadmap should address patients' problems and needs so that they are not left alone with the disease
- The health system and specialists will not have the time to address all needs and problems, so support activities from NGOs should fill in the gap
- To ensure the most effective solutions and the well-being of patients, both levels should be integrated into a patient-centred system

Finally, we all need to remember that atopic dermatitis is not just a one-dimensional disease, but a multi-level problem affecting self-esteem, mental health and often defining the limits of what can be achieved.

Let's try to open doors of opportunity for patients and let them make the most of their lives.



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- All our programmes are based on the experience and indications of our substantive partners including:
- the Maciej Płażyński Polanka Children's Hospital in Gdańsk,
- the Academy of Physical Education and Sport in Gdańsk,
- the Medical University of Gdańsk
- the University of Health in Gdańsk.