

# Relaxation and Eczema

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We are investigating the effect of relaxation on eczema, and are currently seeking adults with eczema to participate.

## Background

Stress has been found to play a substantial role in the onset and severity of eczema. Additionally, eczema itself can lead to a lot of stress for sufferers. For example, the intense itch associated with eczema leads to sleep loss in 80% of sufferers, with an average of 2hrs lost per night. Also, the visible nature of the disease can lead to social stigma and declines in self-esteem. Given that stress exacerbates eczema, and eczema causes stress, there can be vicious downward spiral of increasing stress and worsening eczema. Hence, stress-management is an essential part of treatment of the condition. Relaxation in particular has been found to reduce the severity of eczema; however, it is unclear how the positive effects occur. As such, we are investigating how relaxation influences various psychological and allergic processes that may be involved.

## Aim of the Study

We would like to know whether there are benefits to you from participating in a single session of relaxation. In particular, we are interested in whether relaxation alters the function of the immune and stress systems in the body, and also the perception of physical stimuli. By improving our understanding of how relaxation influences allergic processes, we hope to improve the treatment options made available to eczema sufferers.

## What Does Your Participation Involve?

We are seeking adults with eczema who are not pregnant, and do not smoke or take medications other than those for allergy, asthma, or contraception (these types are allowed). The study involves attending three sessions - an introductory session at the Telethon Institute, followed by a relaxation and a control session at Murdoch University. In the first session, you will be screened for allergy and shown the relaxation procedure and physiological measures that will be used in subsequent sessions. In the next two sessions you will be asked to engage in the relaxation task or sit quietly whilst various physiological and subjective measures are taken.

## Questions

If you are interested in participating, or would like to discuss any aspect of this study, please feel free to contact me:

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I am more than happy to answer any questions you may have, and look forward to hearing from you.