



Gen Ys with acne can be a stubborn spot for dermatologists

Dermatologists are employing innovative strategies to engage with Generation Y patients to combat their at times “know-it-all attitude” when it comes to seeing a medical specialist, according to leading social researcher Mark McCrindle.

Delegates at the Australasian College of Dermatologists’ Annual Scientific Meeting in Darwin have heard that Gen Y patients often seek their own information before attending an appointment with a specialist, and are likely to challenge the doctor’s viewpoint – sometimes to the patient’s own detriment.

Gen Y, defined as those born between 1980 and 1994, have new expectations as patients compared to those that came before them, says McCrindle.

“Gen Y’s access to the information on the Internet means that they believe they are equipped to query the medical specialist and challenge their expertise,” says McCrindle.

“This is particularly relevant to dermatologists treating acne patients, as the Gen Y patient often goes to Google or YouTube to seek answers about their condition, rather than relying on the expertise of the specialist – often confusing themselves in the process.”

Dermatologist Dr Jo-Ann See says there are so many acne treatments available these days, and there is no reason why a young person should suffer in silence.

“It’s very important for someone with acne to seek a medical opinion so they can receive expert help to guide their treatment,” says Dr See.

“There are many myths circulating about acne, but it’s important to turn to an expert to find the correct course of treatment for each individual patient.”

McCrindle says that a Gen Y patient is typically less formal in their interactions, and may, for example, address the doctor by their first name before being invited to do so – something that would never have happened in previous generations, and may put both parties off.

Some of the solutions for dermatologists wishing to get through to their young patients include making an effort to build a relationship beyond simply providing the patient with scientific information, which may include telling stories, providing case studies, and giving examples.

“There’s sometimes a tension between medical specialists and over-informed members of the public,” says McCrindle.

“This stems from our society’s access to technology: but the lay person only has superficial access to information – just enough to be dangerous and give an ungrounded sense of empowerment when it comes to our health care.

“People today, and particularly Generation Y are increasingly educated and through technology are very empowered. Sometimes this results in patients giving equal weight to information they’ve gained from a friend or found online, and the expertise provided by a medical specialist”.

“Australian dermatologists undergo some of the most stringent training in the world to become a skin specialist,” says Dr See.

“Dermatologists are there to provide support to GPs and their patients and to help guide them through the sometimes tricky gamut of acne treatment options.”

For more information about acne treatment options, visit www.allaboutacne.com.au.

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