INTRODUCTION

Acne (acne vulgaris) is one of the most common chronic inflammatory dermatoses in the world. Although effective treatments exist, both physicians and patients are continually seeking strategies to optimise acne management. Recent attention has focused on the potential benefit of dermocosmetics (DC) in acne. DC (or «cosmeceuticals») are skin care products that contain sophisticated active ingredients to improve and reduce the symptoms associated with various skin conditions. Beyond their impact on the maintenance of skin function and integrity, DC have potential biological activity demonstrated in vivo and in vitro on acne pathogenic targets.

OBJECTIVES

This group of experts met to establish, based on a literature review and on an expert agreement, recommendations for the use of DC as monotherapy and/or in association with pharmacologically active treatments in the management of acne.

MATERIAL & METHODS

An international panel of dermatologists with expertise in acne performed a systematic literature review on acne treatments. A Delphi method was used to reach agreement, with a face-to-face expert meeting and three successive online review surveys. The panel acknowledged that the scientific evidence for the use of DC is less robust than for prescription drugs, but used the available evidence and expert agreement to reach consensus.

RESULTS

The expert panel recommends the use of DC as monotherapy to treat milder forms of acne as well as early and prepubertal acne and as a maintenance strategy following prescription treatments. Recommendations are supported by studies demonstrating an overall improvement of acne, a reduction of inflammatory and non-inflammatory lesion counts, a decrease in skin surface sebum and a sustained effect after acne had cleared.

The experts also recommended an association of DC to an adjunctive therapy such as topical and systemic prescription therapies. While there is only little evidence to suggest that an adjunctive use of DC may promote efficacy, the available data suggest that DC have a positive action on the skin barrier function (improve skin hydration and decrease transdermal water loss), contribute to an increased tolerability of acne treatments such as retinoids and benzoyl peroxide, resulting in a higher satisfaction and adherence to treatment and favourably impacts on acne evolution and the patients’ quality of life.

CONCLUSION

Dermocosmetics should be considered as part of the daily routine in the management of acne. The present recommendations provide information on the role of DC and the need for further studies to provide more scientific evidence of their potential benefit.