

The role of camouflage

Many people with scarring, whether it is congenital, dermatological or the result of trauma, find it difficult to request help. Skin camouflage is one of the least discussed areas of healthcare and clinical practice. It is, however, an area where immediate results are achievable by covering and concealing those parts of the face and body that do not conform to the self-image the patient would like to have. Change through skin camouflage can have instantaneous effects, immediately boosting self-confidence. Treatment is suitable for patients of all ages and for most skin conditions.

Improvements in techniques

Historically, healthcare professionals working in postoperative care have perhaps not been fully aware of the improvements in skin camouflage techniques. The main aim of surgeons always has to be to save lives and extend life expectancy; however, there is also a place for improving patients' quality of life with regard to their self-esteem. There are now qualified skin camouflage practitioners specialising in camouflage techniques and primary care nurses who assist with this as part of their practice duties.

Skin camouflage is overseen by the Skin Camouflage Network (SCN) and the British Association of Skin Camouflage (BASC), which upholds professional standards.

Confidence and self-esteem

The aim of skin camouflage practitioners is to help as many patients as possible to minimise their disfigurement and boost their confidence. This helps patients to lead a 'normal' life and interact socially without feeling self-conscious and awkward. The aim is for patients to be self-sufficient in the application of the camouflage products and to achieve this in a very short time.

If the patient has been referred by a GP or consultant, the skin camouflage practitioner will be in receipt of the patient's medical notes before the appointment. In cases of self-referral, physical and psychological information are obtained from the patient in a



Skin camouflage can conceal conditions such as vitiligo

consultation process before treatment is recommended. Everyday activities that are taken for granted by most people become possible for patients who use camouflage. Swimming, potentially embarrassing for many people with disfigurements, is a prime example, as the skin camouflage products are completely waterproof.

New employment and social possibilities can open up as patients become more confident. It may be possible for them to alter their style of dress, to include different types and styles associated with certain jobs and social situations, for example, short sleeves.

The products used in skin camouflage are mixed to match the tone, texture and colour of the skin of each individual who is referred or self-referred. The end result is realistic and discreet. The relative ease of the referral system and the short time it takes to achieve results with skin camouflage are the most exciting and rewarding aspects of this service. Healthcare professionals need to be aware of the psychological, social and emotional improvements that can be gained, as well as the visible physical improvements.



Varama's skin camouflage range puts patients in control

Varama's new range of cover creams aims to provide a product that is simple to blend and easy to apply. The versatile colour range offers variants for White, Asian and Black skins of all ages and is suitable for all pigmentation problems, as well as scars, burns, bruises and birthmarks. Unlike older formulations, no setting agent is required, enabling a faster application and a cost-effective purchase. The products are available online and by prescription.

Varama's website: www.varama.co.uk forms an integral part of the company's offering, providing online skin colour analysis and featuring step-by-step graphic guides to the process of mixing creams to match the patient's skin tone and applying them smoothly and evenly. The site also

carries information about the various conditions for which skin camouflage can be used, as well as detailed advice for users and GPs.

"When seeking advice on skin camouflage, not everybody has access to face-to-face advice and some prefer to do their own research online," says Varama skin camouflage practitioner Vanessa Jane Davies. "With the launch of Varama, our aim is to provide an accessible, easy-to-use solution for everyone with an interest in skin camouflage.

"As our website grows, we aim to offer a broad information resource, covering as many aspects of skin camouflage as we can. We will also provide links to associated websites and

groups that offer further information, and access to registered practitioners if required.

"However, one of the most important aspects of the Varama range is that it enables patients to take control and manage their own appearance. This is a major achievement and Varama can give patients the confidence to carry on with their daily life as normal."

Vanessa Jane Davies

Varama skin camouflage practitioner
www.varama.co.uk

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