

# The Psoriasis Association of Malta

Josette Camilleri B.Sc

Secretary Psoriasis Association of Malta

**The Psoriasis Association of Malta was the brainchild of leading dermatologist Dr. Joe Pace. In January 1994 he invited many of his patients who had this condition, to get together to work out how the association was to function.**

Since then we have met several times. Our meetings usually take the form of a talk by a qualified speaker followed by refreshments. Sometimes we have a question and answer session which many members look forward to. We have been helped in this respect by Dr. Joe Pace and Dr. Dino Vella Briffa several times. Patients always find it

reassuring to have their queries answered by a qualified dermatologist. Being in a group seems to give them more courage to ask questions they would be afraid to ask otherwise.

Except in a few extreme cases, when it appears in conjunction with Psoriatic Arthritis, Psoriasis is more of a social and therefore psychological problem

than a medical one. Even if the condition is mild, the patient feels uncomfortable when having to expose imperfect skin to others. Simple activities can sometimes turn into nightmares. Problems arise at hairdressers, dressmakers, when shopping for clothes, at the beach and especially round swimming pools. For this reason the association worked hard for the first few years to create an awareness of this condition with radio talks and television appearances of members of the committee.

Psychologically, meeting others who can understand what they're going through makes patients feel less isolated. That is why there is always time at meetings for members to discuss their problems and share their experiences.

Since Psoriasis is, to some extent, stress related, some of our meetings were focused on stress reducing techniques. One interesting session was on the benefits of Yoga exercises in this respect. Another highlighted the use of aromatherapy.

Another role of the association is to let members know when new products are available. Pharmaceutical companies approach us when something new appears on the market and they are then invited to give a presentation about their product to our members. The most recent one was held at the plush Hotel Intercontinental last February on the occasion of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology International Spring Symposium. Members were able to learn about the new preparations and were given samples to try out.

*Anybody interested in obtaining more information about the Psoriasis Association of Malta may contact me on tel: 21317338.*