

that a product and its packaging may be recycled. Our results show that a low proportion of the assessed items displays any indication of their recycling potential, therefore adding to unnecessary waste. Raising awareness, promoting sustainability from grassroots levels within dermatology departments and empowering patients to adopt recycling practices enable dermatology as a specialty to encourage pharmaceutical and cosmeceutical companies supplying these products to support ethical recycling values in all medical fields.

Keywords: dermatology recycling, pharmaceutical recycling dermatology, cosmeceutical recycling dermatology, dermatology sustainability

INTRODUCTION

The extent of packaging materials used in topical dermatological products and the sustainability of these are not well known. It is a known fact, however, that individual dermatology departments prescribe or recommend these dermatological products to patients. Most topical treatments prescribed can be full-size and contained within a product container. This container may be supplied with additional packaging boxes and leaflets. These products are also usually available in a smaller, ‘sample’ size, with the intention of being supplied to patients as a trial, prior to the prescription or purchase of a full-size product.

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These are also packaged within a smaller product container and can be packaged individually in boxes or with larger boxes. It is difficult to quantify the number of these products dispensed, but given their easy availability and presence across all dermatology departments, it is likely to be multiple in number. The supply of these products adds to the carbon footprint through their production, amount of packaging and recycling potential.

This study, performed in the form of a quality improvement project, aims to assess current practice in terms of how many dermatological products