

## PRESS RELEASE

*52nd Congress of the Spanish Association of Dermatology and Venereology*

### **Biological therapies plus AI improve quality of life in patients with inflammatory skin diseases**

- Biological therapies and JAK inhibitors for topical and systemic use are revolutionising the management of atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, hidradenitis, vitiligo and alopecia areata, offering new pathways for treating patients
- AI is transforming dermatology, improving diagnostic precision and long-term prognoses; pioneering projects, such as the AI model for hidradenitis suppurativa, help dermatologists assess the severity of the disease and predict its progression
- There has been a 25-fold increase in the incidence of gonorrhoea and a 10-fold increase in syphilis in the last two decades. This is partly due to more screening being carried out and better, more precise diagnostic techniques, but disinformation and lack of sex education also explain this increase among young people

**9 May 2025** - The 52nd Congress of the Spanish Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (AEDV), currently being held in Valencia, has focussed on the latest advances and treatments for inflammatory skin diseases, with sessions on conditions such as hidradenitis suppurativa, autoinflammatory diseases, atopic dermatitis, psoriasis and chronic urticaria, to which have been added indications such as vitiligo and alopecia areata, all of which have a major impact on patients' quality of life.

The advances in knowledge of these diseases is enabling the treatment of more complex processes, including overlap syndrome between psoriasis and atopic dermatitis (characterised by the overlap of symptoms from both conditions) and the impact of microbiota on the inflammatory pathogen. As **Dr. José Manuel Carrascosa**, head of the Dermatology Department at the Germans Trias i Pujol University Hospital in Badalona and second vice-president of the AEDV explains, in daily clinical practice "these advances are reflected in the selection and combination of more effective and personalised treatments, which contribute to improving overall clinical outcomes, focussed on the patient and their expectations".

In Dr. Carrascosa's opinion, the current moment is "dizzily dynamic and exciting, in which the combination of therapeutic innovation, translation biology and new diagnostic techniques, together with the possibilities offered by artificial intelligence, open up opportunities whose limits are still unknown". There are challenges too, such as "the lack of equity in this advance and the exponential rise in costs, which will have to be managed. The good news is that dermatologists are ready to lead the challenge. At the AEDV, we always defend excellent public dermatology care, with equal access and the right professionals, serving patients and society".

## Biological therapies: the dermatology of the future is here

Biological therapies are an innovative and effective option for the future of dermatology. In the case of vitiligo, a chronic immune disorder that causes depigmentation of the skin affecting around 900,000 people in Spain<sup>1</sup>, topical-use JAK inhibitors, such as ruxolitinib, are already being used. While other systemic JAK inhibitors still in the clinical trial phase, such as upadacitinib, are also showing promising results. These biological therapies, in combination with others, such as narrow band ultraviolet radiation phototherapy, which is still a safe and valid therapeutic option, represent a significant change in the management of vitiligo, offering new hope to patients affected by this condition”, assured **Dr. Isabel Belinchón**, a dermatologist at the Dr. Balmis General University Hospital in Alicante, and first vice-president of the AEDV.

In addition, biological therapies are also revolutionising the treatment of alopecia areata, an autoimmune disease which causes patchy hair loss, affecting the daily lives of over 8,000 people in Spain<sup>2</sup>. “Without doubt, the approval of the anti-JAK drugs baricitinib, approved for adults with severe alopecia, and ritlecitinib, for patients aged 12 and above, are major advances. Both drugs have been shown to be highly effective, with a good safety profile”, stated **Dr. Sergio Vañó**, head of the Trichology Unit at the Ramón y Cajal University Hospital in Madrid and secretary general of the AEDV. At the same time, Dr. Vañó stressed the fact that “there are over a hundred different types of alopecia, which means dermatologists need to make the right diagnosis and select the most appropriate treatment for each patient”. Given the rise in hair transplants in recent years, it is also worth reiterating that “not all patients are suitable for transplants; it all depends on the quality of the hair”. In any case, “hair transplants are always complementary to medical treatment, rather than a replacement for it”.

## Artificial intelligence as the dermatologist’s ally

Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionising dermatology, improving precision diagnosis and the management of inflammatory diseases. At this 52nd Congress, we have learned about AI projects headed by dermatologists, which are already being applied to the management of acne and skin cancer screening campaigns, such as the AEDV’s Euromelanoma campaign<sup>3</sup>. They are also being used to predict the therapeutic response in inflammatory diseases, where AI is improving the interpretation of complex clinical images and speeding up differential diagnosis in overlapping inflammatory dermatoses.

“In hidradenitis suppurativa, an initial AI model was presented in collaboration with Legit.Health. The model is a world pioneer, based on clinical information and image analysis, and promises to help dermatologists measure the degree of severity of this disease and predict the risk of progression, through a simple photo taken by a mobile phone or any other camera”, explained **Dr. Antonio Martorell**, a dermatologist at the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://aedv.es/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/NP-Investigacion-en-dermatologia.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Vañó S, Figueras I, Artime E, Díaz-Cerezo S, Núñez M, Iglesias C, et al. Epidemiology and characteristics of patients with Alopecia Areata in Spain: a real-world retrospective study. The PETALO Study. Poster presented at: 23rd Meeting of the AEDV Spanish Trichology Group. 21-22 October 2022; Bilbao.

<sup>3</sup> <https://euromelanoma.aedv.es/>

Manises Hospital and coordinator of the AEDV Hidradenitis Suppurativa Group, which is currently working on a guide to management of the disease.

Dr. Martorell stressed that “hidradenitis suppurativa, which affects 1.5% of the population, has a severe impact on patients’ quality of life, both physically and emotionally”. Given its complexity, “it is essential that this condition is managed, under the supervision of a dermatologist, by a multidisciplinary medical team capable of adapting to the specific needs of each patient, made up of specialist nurses, rheumatologists, gastroenterologists, endocrinologists, and mental health and primary care specialists, among others”.

In this translational approach, which places patients and their needs at the centre of decision-making, AI is integrated into a healthcare process as an ally for the dermatologist, in both the initial diagnostic phase and in patient follow-up and interpretation of results. Although it is a highly useful tool, it should be clear that at all times that, “without the human factor —without a specialist’s criteria— management of the disease would not be possible”.

### **Rise in sexually transmitted infections (STIs)**

The increase in sexually transmitted diseases (STIs) is nothing new, as it is a trend we have observed over the last 20 years. According to figures from 2023 (the most recent available from the Ministry of Health), there has been a 25-fold rise in the incidence of gonorrhoea in the last two decades, and 10-fold rise in syphilis<sup>4</sup>.

According to **Dr. Irene Fuertes**, a dermatologist at the Hospital Clínic in Barcelona and coordinator of the AEDV STI and HIV research group, “one of the reasons for the increase in STIs is because much more screening is carried out and we have better, more precise diagnostic techniques”. Furthermore, “although it is true that there have not been any major advances in the treatment of these diseases, there has been significant progress in prevention in recent years, from pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), which has changed the panorama for HIV, to strategies such as DoxyPEP, which is emerging as an effective method for the prevention of bacterial STIs”.

Another factor in the rising trend in STIs is relaxation in the use of protective measures in sexual relations, especially among young people. “This is partly due to disinformation and lack of quality sex education. It is crucial for young people to receive adequate education in healthy and responsible sex, which should be an institutional priority”, assured Dr. Fuertes, who also stressed the need for education on the importance of early diagnosis and screening.

Many STIs are asymptomatic, which hinders their early diagnosis. In this regard, “carrying out regular screenings is fundamental, especially among people with high-risk sexual practices. This should include specific tests for the different mucosa and zones of the body, not just a blood test. This is essential for the prevention and control of STIs”. Consequently, as Dr. Fuertes underlined, “the dermatologist has a key role to play in the diagnosis of STIs, in differential diagnosis with other diseases, which is something other specialities lack”.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://cne.isciii.es/documents/d/cne/vigilancia\\_its\\_1995\\_2023-2](https://cne.isciii.es/documents/d/cne/vigilancia_its_1995_2023-2)

### **About AEDV**

The Spanish Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (AEDV), an organisation founded 100 years ago, provides a meeting point for Spanish dermatologists, almost all of whom are members (97%). The AEDV aims to promote the study of the skin and its diseases to the benefit of patients.

Visit the website of the 52nd Congress of the AEDV at [this link](#)

### **For more information**

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