

— Editorial

MYTHS VS FACTS IN SKIN DISEASES

Throughout history and since ancient times, myths have been confused with realities, sometimes creating a confusing panorama within which doctors, patients, mothers, grandmothers, healers and charlatans move. Sometimes resulting in the application of concepts and therapies that often have no head or tail.

According to the *Dictionary of the Spanish Language, Espasa-Calpe*, myth is a fabulous and imaginary narrative that tries to give a non-rational explanation to reality. In short, it is an invention, a fantasy.

On the other hand, according to [Conceptos.com](https://conceptos.com)'s criterion, "*Reality is the true and effective existence of things, comprising everything that exists in opposition to the imaginary,*" while the same *Dictionary of the Spanish Language* simplifies it into three sentences; "*As a real and effective existence*"; "*Like everything that constitutes the real world*" and finally, it highlights it with the phrase; "*Indeed, without a doubt.*"

It must be recognized that some dermatological myths have already been destroyed, but many others survive and some with great force; Among the first we will mention:

- Drink plenty of water; moisturizes the skin.
- Various shampoos stop hair loss.
- Cutting the hair makes it come out stronger.
- A good hand when cutting hair increases hair growth.
- Washing your hair a lot and wearing hats cause more hair to fall out and more oil to come out.
- Performing a biopsy or removing a mole causes it to become malignant.
- The lack of sexual activity causes the appearance of acne, this being one of the most widespread beliefs. She was even brought to the screen in the film *Acne*, by Federico Veroj.
- Sunscreen use can lead to cancer.

However, the advent of social networks (especially after the confinement in the pandemic, with a great deal of consultation) gave rise to advantages and disadvantages, among the latter; a proliferation of medical myths, with manifest consequences in the doctor-patient

relationship, since they arrive at the consultation with preformed ideas, far from reality and without any scientific basis, which hinders the work of the dermatologist, who often has to try to clarify these concepts without leading the patient to feel rejected, ridiculed and, even worse, confronted. It is necessary that the specialist can, with patience, and even knowing that this increases the consultation time, guide the patient along the path of truth and thus gain their trust.

Let us not forget that sometimes, the young patient with acne carrying a baggage full of myths and a great psychological sensitivity, may be accompanied by his grandmother and, by debunking these common myths about the causes and treatment of acne, he can deeply hurt the sensitivity and deep-rooted concepts of the lady and, firmly establish in her, a real distrust of the dermatologist's ability, leading her, as the title of a famous literary work said, to think seriously about the *"Return of the Sorcerers,"* that is, to consult again people who exercise the very ancient profession of healers, without studies or degrees, which endorse their knowledge, but who even today, they still have a lot of followers.

To conclude, we could quote the famous Hindu Philosopher, when he said: *"In the end, after clearing the intricate paths of life, I can affirm that I would have intensely wished that many legends had been realities and many realities, only myths. And maybe, just maybe, I would have had a dream life."*

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