

## Battling skin diseases: Biotech-based skincare products aim to shut down genes responsible for unwanted inflammation and itchiness

New [technology](#) — particularly the application of immunology — is transforming dermatology from a low-margin pharmaceutical backwater into a fast-growing, high-value market, said Francesco De Rubertis, executive chair of [pharmaceutical company] Alys.

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Alys has set up six operating subsidiaries — three in the US and three in the UK — focusing on different types of skin disease and treatment mechanisms. Their targets include psoriasis, atopic dermatitis (eczema), pruritus (itching) and vitiligo (loss of skin colour).

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“There is a multibillion-dollar untapped market, because these drugs are still used only for people who have very severe disease — wrongly in my view — when actually any form or severity of the disease would respond equally well,” [Christopher Griffiths, director of the Manchester Centre for Dermatology Research said.]

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Alys is pursuing a remarkable variety of approaches, said Griffiths. One technology being developed is siRNA (short interfering RNA), which aims to shut down genes responsible for unwanted inflammation in the skin. The company’s scientists are also working with antibodies, peptides and more traditional small molecules. Some of the drugs will be injected into or under the skin, while others are applied as a topical gel.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the full article here\*\*](#)