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Google searches in patient self-care increase during the COVID-19 lockdown



To the Editor: The recently published article by Guzman and Barbieri¹ provides useful insight into the dermatologic concerns of the public before and after entering periods of lockdown during COVID-19, recapitulating our own findings in the United Kingdom.² However, a facet we believe the authors' analysis has overlooked is an increased interest in conditions patients can self-treat. In our UK population, we noticed an increase in searches for warts, acne, and laser hair removal after lockdown,² terms that were also searched more frequently in the United States after lockdown (increases of 2%, 6%, and 12%, respectively). Although routine clinics have been closed, there appears to have been interest in skin conditions that are perceived to be amenable to self-treatment.¹ Additional attention of dermatologists and manufacturers should be focused on augmenting educational resources and validating the safety and efficacy of over-the-counter treatments and home-use devices,³ which patients may turn to during these times.

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