



**Project Leflet:**

**ECZEMA COUNSELLING VIA THE INTERNET  
A randomized controlled trial**

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**Background:**

In 2002 the Norwegian Centre for Telemedicine and the pediatric ward at then Regional Hospital of Tromsø conducted a pre-project where there was given counselling via e-mail to four children with atopic eczema and their families over a period of four months. The pre-project showed/revealed that such an offer is technically possible and the parents were satisfied and thought the children's health improved.

**Purpose:**

The project will survey if internet based counselling directly home to the parents of children with atopic eczema leads to improvement of the children's health, and if the parents feel increased management of their children's disease. In addition, the project will seek to find out if such counselling will lead to fewer doctor appointments and hospitalizations as opposed to regular treatment, and if this all in all will save the health system any costs. It will also be surveyed if this leads to reduced costs for the families involved.

**Description:**

The technical solution makes it possible for the parents to send messages with photos and text in a predefined template to the Pediatric and Dermatology ward at UNN (University Hospital of North Norway). Specially trained nurses and specialist will answer this message with advice concerning treatment adapted to each individual child. There will be no limitations in how often or how many messages the families can send. The technical solution (Well Arena) meets the demands of computer safety in the protection of privacy legislation. The families needs to have a computer, an Internet connection and a digital camera to participate in the study



**Method:**

The study is going to be a randomized controlled trial, where those who are interested are randomly selected either to an intervention group (n=50), that is offered web based counselling, or to a control group (n=50), which receives traditional treatment at the pediatric or dermatology ward at UNN. Children from 6 months-12 years of age will be included in the project. This service will be tested at the pediatric ward at UNN in the period from January 2005 to September 2007. The study lasts 3 years, where the phase of counselling for each family will be 1 year.

**Project Period:**

Start: Jan. 2005  
Finish: December 2007

**Financing:**

Telemedical Research Program, North Norwegian Health Authority

**Project Partners:**

Paediatric Ward at UNN (University Hospital of North Norway)  
Dermatology Ward at UNN (University Hospital of North Norway)

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