

**Inadequate information and medical back-up for patient undergoing  
chemical face peel  
(99HDC12013, 21 May 2001)**

*Dermatologist ~ Standard of care ~ Face peel ~ Medical back-up ~  
Information about procedure and treatment options ~ Rights 4(3), 6(1)(b)*

A 67-year-old woman complained that a dermatologist incorrectly led her to believe that the trichloroacetic acid (TCA) face peel he performed on her was a minor procedure.

Eleven days after the treatment the woman experienced a face rash and was unable to contact the dermatologist or anyone else at his practice. Although it was Boxing Day, she had been assured that she would be able to contact someone over this period if necessary. The rash was perioral dermatitis, a common reaction to the emollients used during the healing process. Although the dermatologist had given her detailed written information sheets, they contained no reference to possible complications and risks.

The woman also complained that the dermatologist did not inform her of the strength of the TCA used for the peel, and that he made an erroneous claim that no treatment for sun damage would be required for five years after the peel.

The dermatologist breached Right 4(3), as he should have ensured medical back-up was available to his patients during his absence. He also breached Right 6(1)(b), as he had not adequately explained the expected risks and side effects of the peel, or the treatment options available. However, the procedure itself was found to be appropriate and carried out with skill and expertise.