

Resources for Hyperhidrosis Sufferers, Patients, and Health Care Providers



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KEYWORDS

- Hyperhidrosis • Excessive sweating • Iontophoresis • Botox reimbursement
- Hyperhidrosis resources • Antiperspirants • Patient support • Patient advocacy

KEY POINTS

- Hyperhidrosis has a profoundly negative impact on sufferers' quality of life, yet medical professionals are scarcely trained in hyperhidrosis diagnosis and treatment.
- Sufferers do not seek treatment because they think nothing can be done, they do not know where to find medical care, or they are too embarrassed to discuss it with their physician.
- Bridging this gap is the International Hyperhidrosis Society (IHHS): a nonprofit organization that defines itself as the global authority in hyperhidrosis care and treatment, providing reliable information to the global, underserved community of sufferers and treatment providers.
- The Web site of the IHHS, www.SweatHelp.org, is the organization's virtual headquarters; content is translated into all languages, allowing the organization to truly serve an international audience.
- Medical professionals can discover more than 100 pages of resources through the IHHS from hyperhidrosis diagnosis and treatment to practice efficiency.

Founded in 2003 by an elite team of world-renowned physicians and experts in hyperhidrosis research, The International Hyperhidrosis Society (IHHS) has emerged as the global authority in hyperhidrosis care and treatment. Hyperhidrosis is a debilitating condition that causes the sufferer to sweat excessively, regardless of body temperature or external conditions. This nonprofit organization is committed to raising awareness and increasing the understanding and the quality of treatment of people who sweat excessively.

The IHHS is a distinctly 21st century organization; before its creation, there were few, if any, resources devoted to educating patients and health care providers on the cause and treatments of hyperhidrosis. The IHHS was created to address this

gap in care because effective treatment of this disease can have a life-altering effect on a sufferer; likewise, for medical professionals, treating someone who has shouldered the burden and shame of hyperhidrosis can be extremely gratifying.

Hyperhidrosis is defined by copious uncontrollable sweating; it can affect any area of the body, but frequently occurs on the underarms, hands and/or feet, head, back, groin, chest, or other areas. Sweating excessively is physically uncomfortable; it can result in irritating or painful skin problems, such as bacterial or fungal overgrowth, infections, and maceration of the skin. It can also be an impediment to completing everyday tasks: someone with excessively sweating hands, for instance, can have great difficulty operating hand-held

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devices, holding a steering wheel, and even holding a child.

The psychosocial and emotional damage that results from this condition can be devastating. Social anxiety and isolation due to the embarrassment and shame of sweating excessively leads to a limiting of ambitions and interactions with other people. Depression and decreased confidence are frequent side effects. Hyperhidrosis can also impose a financial burden: increased everyday expenses for necessities like extra clothing and antiperspirant supplies (not to mention the time it costs to manage the symptoms daily) add up over time. Some hyperhidrosis treatments are expensive, and obtaining insurance coverage for these, or any, hyperhidrosis treatment can be challenging.

The positive side of this condition is that outlook for patient care is continually improving, with credit going largely to the work of the IHHS. Effectively managing excessive sweating is possible: there is a range of treatment options available, based on both cutting-edge medical science and more traditional, but effective remedies. The one true obstacle to receiving care is the lack of knowledge in the medical community and the lack of information (and a preponderance of misinformation)

about hyperhidrosis among sufferers and their health care providers.

Over the past decade, the IHHS has begun removing this barrier to care through a major informational and educational outreach effort that targets both of these groups. SweatHelp.org is the IHHS's virtual global headquarters and central to much of this outreach; it provides users with a wealth of up-to-date and authoritative hyperhidrosis information and educational resources from world-renowned experts in the field.

SweatHelp.org receives more than 4000 visitors per day and is equipped with a dynamic translator tool that interprets content into every language (Fig. 1). The Web site includes a complete examination of all types of excessive sweating, from focal areas to night sweats, to compensatory, gustatory, and full-body sweating. All of the available treatment options are discussed as well as the pros and cons of each.

The Web site is divided into 4 sections, with content tailored to each particular audience: medical professional, hyperhidrosis sufferer, teen-aged or adolescent sufferer, and the media. The IHHS works diligently to ensure that the material on the Web site is the most reliable and current on the Internet.



Fig. 1. SweatHelp.org receives more than 4000 visitors per day and is equipped with a dynamic translator tool that interprets content into every language. (Courtesy of International Hyperhidrosis Society, Quakertown, PA; with permission.)

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