I can take delight in MY SKIN now’

Psoriasis had blighted Jean Knights’ life since childhood, but she has finally found an effective treatment to keep it at bay.

For almost as long as she can remember Jean Knights has felt different from other people – ashamed of how her body looks and embarrassed by the reaction she gets when she meets someone for the first time. This summer will be different. ‘I’m looking forward to getting my legs out and wearing shorter skirts,’ she laughs.

It’s taken until the age of 69 for Knights, from Guildford in Surrey, to feel confident about wearing anything other than ankle-length skirts and long-sleeved tops.

Since the age of seven she has suffered from psoriasis, a condition that affects more than a million people in the UK and which causes red, crusty patches on the skin, covered by silvery scales.

It is physically painful and itchy but can also cause deep psychological scars for sufferers, as Knights, a psychotherapist, knows only too well.

‘All the talk now is about coronavirus but I have been using the same language all my life to talk about myself,’ she says. ‘I have felt contagious – as though I am a threat to others even though psoriasis isn’t infectious. People look at you in a certain way – they are wary of you. It’s a horrible way to live.’

For Knights, the problem started at the age of 18 when she moved to London and met her husband, but her wedding day was also marred by psoriasis. ‘Certainly, for me, warmer climates do seem to help, and being in London and met her husband, but her wedding day was also marred by psoriasis. ‘Certainly, for me, warmer climates do seem to help, and being in London and met her husband, but her wedding day was also marred by psoriasis. ‘Certainly, for me, warmer climates do seem to help, and being in London and met her husband, but her wedding day was(337,801),(654,998)

Jean Knights, 69

Jean aged 18, before psoriasis affected her face

The condition can run in families, but the cause is still being investigated.

Psoriasis is normally made by a GP before referral to a specialist. Treatments can include vitamin D creams, steroids and controlled exposure to UV light, called phototherapy.

For more information:

- nhs.uk/conditions/psoriasis
- psoriasis-association.org.uk
- frankpharma.co.uk

sold by a small UK company. It’s a three-step regimen consisting of a gel, a cream, and an oil. It is not currently available on the NHS but costs around £120 for the first package and is a combination of natural creams, gels and oils.

‘You have to be dedicated about putting it on but it has worked for me,’ Knights says. ‘I have this huge sense of gratitude because for the first time I can take delight in my skin and feel normal. I have carried this self-loathing with me all my life but psoriasis has also been my greatest teacher, about me and my body.’