CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

ishga



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Exploring the science behind the Anti-oxidant Marine Cream

An Interview with Director, Malcolm Macrae

Based on the Isle of Lewis, Scottish skincare brand ishga combines the natural properties of locally sourced seaweed with a science-led approach to skincare. Research plays an important role in the company's product development, reflecting its commitment to understanding the potential benefits of its marine ingredients.

We spoke to ishga about its collaboration with Labskin, exploring how 3D in vitro human skin models helped investigate its Anti-oxidant Marine Cream and provided valuable scientific insight into the formulation.

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THE COLLABORATION AND STUDY

What stood out to you about Labskin's expertise, technology or approach to testing compared with what you were looking for in a research partner?

Labskin's use of sophisticated 3D human skin models stood out. The ability to investigate inflammatory markers, skin structure and barrier-related proteins within a controlled laboratory environment offered a much deeper understanding of our product than conventional ingredient-based research alone.

How did you find the experience of working with the Labskin team, from the initial discussions through to the study design, testing and delivery of the results?

We had a very positive experience working with the Labskin team. From the initial discussions and receipt of the study protocols through to testing and delivery of the final results, the whole process was efficient, smooth and well organised. The team communicated clearly throughout and made each stage straightforward.

Why was using a 3D in vitro human skin model an appropriate approach for investigating the effects of your Anti-oxidant Marine Cream?

The 3D skin model allowed us to investigate how our finished formulation interacted with a skin-like environment and examine biological responses. This was particularly useful for exploring inflammation, skin structure and barrier-related processes under controlled conditions.



What were the main outcomes you wanted to investigate in the study, and why were inflammation, skin structure and skin barrier function important to ishga?

We wanted to investigate inflammatory responses, the maintenance of normal skin structure and proteins associated with skin barrier function. These are interconnected aspects of skin health and particularly relevant to our interest in understanding the potential benefits of seaweed-based skincare.

THE COLLABORATION AND STUDY

The study found reduced expression of IL-1α in both healthy and irritated skin models, alongside the maintenance of normal skin structure. What did these findings mean to you?

These were encouraging findings, suggesting the formulation may influence an important inflammatory marker while maintaining normal skin structure in the laboratory models. They provided valuable scientific insight and a strong basis for further investigating the potential benefits of our formulation.

The study also showed increased production of the skin barrier proteins filaggrin and involucrin. Why are these findings relevant?

Filaggrin and involucrin play important roles in the skin's protective barrier. Their increased production was an interesting finding, suggesting the formulation may influence processes associated with barrier function and providing valuable direction for future research.



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BUSINESS IMPACT AND VALUE

How have the study findings helped you better understand the performance of your Anti-oxidant Marine Cream and the science behind its formulation?

The study gave us a deeper understanding of the biological responses associated with our cream, moving beyond our knowledge of its ingredients to investigate the finished formulation. The results have helped us inform our customers about the benefits of using the product.

How important is independently generated laboratory data when communicating the science behind your products?

It is extremely important. Independent laboratory data helps us build credibility, demonstrate our commitment to research and provide customers and retail partners with a better understanding of the science behind our products. It also helps us communicate product benefits responsibly.

Have the findings influenced how you approach product communication, scientific substantiation, future research or new product development?

Yes. The findings have reinforced the value of testing finished formulations and building evidence around specific biological effects. They have also encouraged us to explore further research into our products and seaweed extracts to strengthen scientific understanding and substantiate appropriate product claims.

LOOKING AHEAD

What value do you see in collaborating with an external scientific partner like Labskin, and would you consider working with us on future research projects?

External partners provide specialist expertise and technology that complement our in-house capabilities. We would certainly consider further collaboration, as we see significant potential in building on these findings to better understand our seaweed ingredients and strengthen the scientific evidence behind ishga.

What advice would you give to other skincare brands that want to strengthen their scientific understanding and generate evidence?

Start with clear research questions and choose a scientific partner who can design appropriate testing around them. Investigate the finished formulation rather than relying solely on individual ingredient properties, and view research as a long-term investment in product development, credibility and consumer confidence.

GET IN TOUCH

Ready to revolutionise your product testing with Labskin.

Talk to our expert team to find out how we can support your research and development needs.

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