What is claimed is:

1. A topical oil-in-water emulsion composition comprising:
   (a) a discontinuous oil phase;
   (b) a continuous aqueous phase comprising water;
   (c) a thickening agent;
   (d) at least one lamellar membrane structure comprising (i) an alkyl amphiphilic component, (ii) an ester of a branched fatty acid and a branched fatty alcohol, (iii) a fatty acid, and (iv) at least one fatty alcohol; and optionally (v) a phospholipid;
   wherein in use the composition has a water vapor transmission rate of less than 65 $g.m^{-2}.hr^{-1}$ measured *in vitro* using *mod*WVTR test methodology.

2. The composition according to claim 1, wherein the composition comprises two or more fatty alcohols selected from the group consisting of C12 to C30 fatty alcohols.

3. The composition according to claim 2, wherein one of the two or more fatty alcohols is selected from the group consisting of a C18 to C30 fatty alcohol.

4. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the at least one fatty alcohol is a mixture of cetyl alcohol and behenyl alcohol.

5. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the at least one fatty alcohol is a mixture of cetyl alcohol and cetearyl alcohol.

6. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the at least one fatty alcohol is a mixture of cetearyl alcohol and behenyl alcohol.

7. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the molar ratio of the second fatty alcohol to the amount of cetyl alcohol is from about 4: 1 to about 0.35:1.

8. The composition according to claim 1 wherein the lamellar structure comprises about 5 to about 75 % by weight of the pharmaceutical composition.

9. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the alkyl amphiphilic component is a dialkyl amphiphilic component and optionally a mixture of a dialkyl and a monoalkyl amphiphilic component.

10. The composition according to claim 9, wherein the alkyl amphiphilic component is a dialkyl amphiphilic component and each alkyl group is independently selected from the group consisting of C14 to C22 alkyl groups.

11. The composition according to claim 9, wherein the alkyl amphiphilic component is a dialkyl amphiphilic component and the alkyl groups are C16 alkyl groups.

12. The composition according to claim 9, wherein the alkyl amphiphilic component is a monoalkyl amphiphilic component and the alkyl group is selected from the group consisting of C14 to C22 alkyl groups.

13. The composition according to claim 12, wherein the alkyl amphiphilic component is a monoalkyl amphiphilic component and the alkyl group is a C16 alkyl group.

14. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 13, wherein the alkyl amphiphilic component is potassium dicetyl phosphate and optionally a potassium monocetyl phosphate.

15. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein the ester is an ester of a C12 to C30 branched fatty acid and a C12 to C30 branched fatty alcohol.

16. The composition according to claim 15, wherein the ester is an ester of a C18 branched fatty acid and a C18 branched fatty alcohol.

17. The composition according to any of claims 1 to 16 wherein the composition has a mole % of the ester of about 5.0 % to about 18%.

18. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 17, wherein the fatty acid is a C16 to C30 fatty acid.

19. The composition according to any of the preceding claims that has a mole % of about 2.0 to about 11 mol% of the alkyl amphiphilic component; about 5.0 % to about 18% mol% of the ester; about 6% to about 20 mol % of the fatty acid; and about 50to about 85mol% of the alcohol, and optionally about 2.0 to about 8.0mol% of the phosphatidylcholine.

20. The composition according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the phospholipid is hydrogenated lecithin.

21. The composition according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the composition has a water vapor transmission rate of less than 62 $g.m^{-2}.hr^{-1}$ measured in vitro.

22. Use of a topical oil-in-water emulsion composition as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in the manufacture of a medicament for moisturizing, and protecting, repairing, or restoring the skin lipid barrier of a mammal.

23. A topical oil-in-water emulsion composition as claimed in any one of the preceding claims for use in moisturizing, and protecting, repairing, or restoring the skin lipid barrier of a mammal.