CLAIMS

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 which is isostearyl isostearate, (iii) a fatty acid which is behenic acid, (iv) a mixture of fatty alcohols comprising at least two selected from the group consisting of cetyl alcohol, cetearyl alcohol and behenyl alcohol, and (v) a phospholipid which is hydrogenated phosphatidylcholine;

wherein the ester and alkyl amphiphilic component are in a weight ratio of about 10:1 to about 1:10; the fatty acid and alkyl amphiphilic component are in a weight ratio of about 10:1 to about 1:10; the fatty alcohol and alkyl amphiphilic component are in a weight ratio of about 20:1 to about 2:1; and the alkyl amphiphilic component and phospholipid are in a molar ratio of about 35:1 to about 6:1; and

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 mixture of fatty alcohols comprises cetyl alcohol and behenyl alcohol, and a molar ratio of behenyl alcohol to cetyl alcohol is from about 4: 1 to about 0.35: 1.

3. The composition according to claim 1, wherein the alkyl amphiphilic component is a dialkyl amphiphilic component, or monoalkyl amphiphilic component.

4. The composition according to claim 3, 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.

5. The composition according to claim 4, wherein the alkyl groups are each C16 alkyl groups.

6. The composition according to claim 3, 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.

7. The composition according to claim 6, wherein the alkyl group is a C16 alkyl group.

8. The composition according to claim 1, wherein the alkyl amphiphilic component is potassium dicetyl phosphate or a potassium monocetyl phosphate.

9. The composition according to claim 1 wherein the composition has a mole % of the ester of about 5.0% to about 18%.

10. The composition according to claim 1 comprising 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 50 to about 85 mol% of the alcohol, and about 2.0 to about 8.0 mol% of the phosphatidylcholine.

11. The composition according to claim 1, wherein the composition has a water vapor transmission rate of less than 62 $g.m^{-2}.hr^{-1}$ measured *in vitro*.