

## **Prevalence of Psychological Problems Upon Patients with Psoriasis**

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### **Abstract**

*Objective (s): the aim of this study is to assess the prevalence of psychological problem upon patients with psoriasis.*

*Methodology: This study adopted a descriptive design in the Dermatology Unit at Al-Najaf Teaching Hospital and Al-Sadr Medical City from 30 October, 2022 to 2 May, 2023. Filled out the questionnaire by 60 patients with psoriasis chosen by non-probability purposive method. Data was analyzed by using Social descriptive statistics and SPSS version 24*

*Results: The result of the study shows a significant relationship between psoriasis and psychological problem.*

*Conclusion: Depending on the study result there is a significant correlation between the psychological status and psoriasis disease.*

*Recommendations: Educational programs about self-care should be provided to patients with psoriasis to learn them more about control and avoiding stress and coping with the disease*

**Keywords:** *Patients, Psoriasis, Psychological problem.*

### **Introduction**

Of all the parts of the human body, the skin is the most vulnerable to disabilities such as scratches, injuries, and burns (1). Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory disease that affects the skin and causes erythematous skin scaling, in addition to that, it affects different parts of the body, the incidence of psoriasis in Asian countries is lower than the incidence in the United States and Norway (2). In 2014 highlighted the distress related to misdiagnosis, inadequate treatment, and stigmatization of psoriasis by the World Health Organization (WHO) after recognizing that psoriasis is a serious non-contagious disease (3). The elbows, knees, scalp, umbilical, and lumbar region are the most common part of the body affected by the lesions, while nails, face, palms and soles, and intertriginous regions are less frequently psoriatic lesions (4). Psoriasis has a negative impact on physical as well as social and emotional well-being, causing depression and anxiety associated with clinical comfort (5). Several mental health disorders such as an increased risk of anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, alexithymia (difficulty identifying or expressing emotions), stress, self-harm, and suicidality were found to be associated with psoriasis adversely, were found patients without psoriasis have less mental health

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comorbidity than patients with psoriasis (6). psoriasis symptoms such as pain, pruritus and visibility scale can cause embarrassment, social discomfort and anxiety, increasing the risk of depression and anxiety in patients with psoriasis (7).

Significant of study:

Psoriasis is a serious global problem affecting rated 1–3% of the world's population accounting for more than 200 million people (8). Pruritus is one of the most common symptoms in skin diseases, especially psoriasis, and it is an annoying sensation that causes itching that can last for several weeks, which negatively affects the social and psychological aspects of the patient life, such as anxiety and depression, which a close link has been found with chronic pruritus (9).

Objectives of the Study:

This study aims to assess the prevalence of psychological problems in patients with psoriasis disease

## Methodology

Study Design:

The descriptive (cross-sectional) design was adopted in this study during the period from 30 October 2022, to 2 May 2023.

Study Setting

The data was collected at Al-Najaf Teaching Hospital and Al-Sadr Medical City.

Study Sample

A purposive, non-probability sample of 60 male and female patients with psoriasis, and different educational levels.

Ethical consideration:

Consent of the Nursing Council / University of Baghdad and the Ethical Research Committee was obtained, and official permission was obtained from patients after assurance for them to keep their privacy and information and used just for scientific objectives.

Instrument of the study:

A questionnaire was used that contains the first part contained demographic information that includes, gender, marital status, occupation, and type of treatment and smoking, and the second part contains clinical information that includes the duration of psoriasis, the patient's medical history, and the psychological history that includes anxiety, feelings of shame and embarrassment, depression, other problems, and the type of treatment used. The content of the questionnaire validity was evaluated by an expert panel of 11, experts with more than 6 years of experience. Data analyze by Descriptive statistics and SPSS were used to examine the data.

## Result

Table (1): Distribution of patients' socio-demographic Data (N=60)

Gender	F	%
Male	25	41.7
Female	35	58.3

Total	75	100
Marital status	F	%
Single	47	78.3
Married	13	21.7
Total	60	100
Occupation	F	%
Student	12	20.0
Housewife	17	28.3
Government employee	20	33.3
Retired	3	5.0
Free work	8	13.3
Total	60	100
Smoking	F	%
Yes	14	23.3
No	45	75
Quit smoking	1	1.7
Total	60	100
Type of treatment	F	%
Topical treatment & phototherapy	53	88.3
Topical treatment only	7	11.7
Total	60	100

This table demonstrates that (58.3%) of the study subject were females and most of them (78.3%) were single and (33.3%) of the patients were governmental employee. Concerning the smoking and type of treatment the results record 45 of 60 participants were not smoking, and (88.3%) use topical and phototherapy.

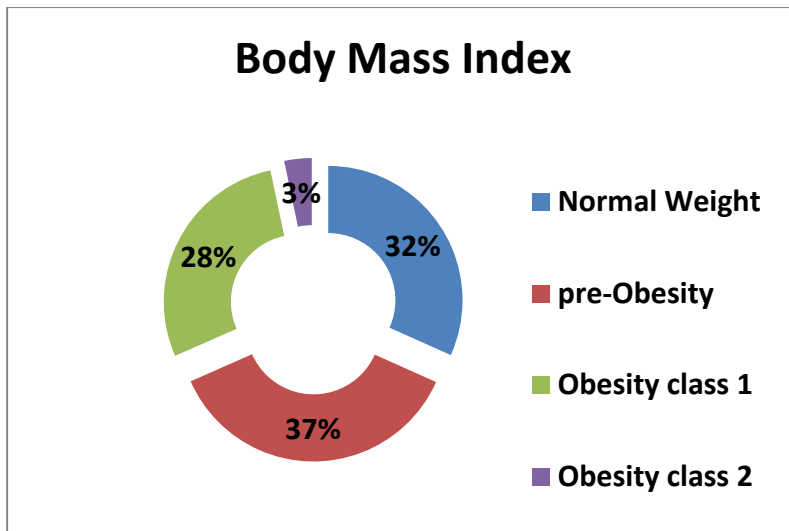


Figure 1: Body Mass Index of the patients This figure demonstrates that most of the patients were pre-obese depending on WHO classification of BMI. BMI was calculated by division body weight in Kilogram on the height in Metric Squares (10)

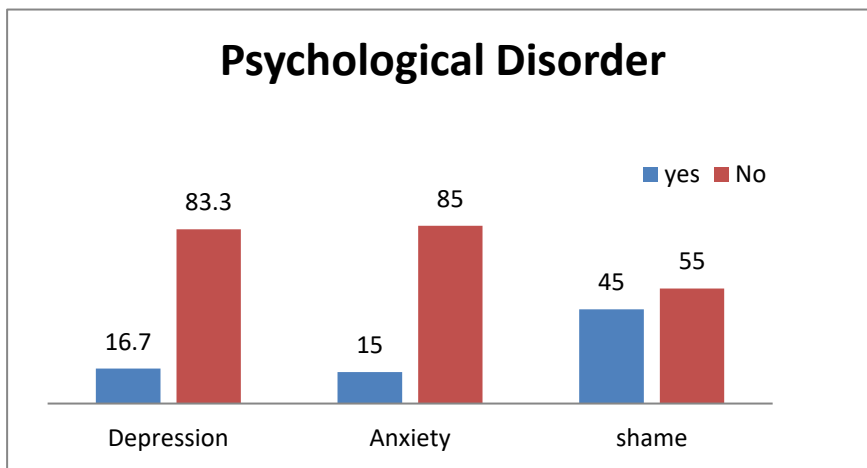


Figure 2: Psychological disorder of the patients

This figure records the psychological disorders among the patients with psoriasis, it is apparently that about the half (45%) of the study sample suffering from shame. Several factors lead to stigma, including fear of infection, social judgment, stereotypes, lack of awareness, prejudice, and fear of social repercussions (11). and (16.7%) suffering from depression. Depression is a widespread mental disorder, including depressed mood, poor sleep, lack of interest and enjoyment, loss of appetite, loss of energy, lack of concentration, and feeling queasy (12).

### Discussion

According to gender showed most participants gender of the current study were females the most in a ratio (58.3%) and this result was supported by (13) that refer to (58.72%) of women representing the majority of psoriasis patients.

Regarding the marital status of participants, the results showed that single participants were the most among them (78.3 %) and many studies supported this result such as (14), results pointed out that most participants (71%) in the study were unmarried. Most of them (33.3%) were government employees and

conducted by (15) that refers to most of the study Participants (85.2%) were employed persons. (75 %) were not smoking which is supported by a study conducted (16) that sure most participants in the study were not smokers. Iraq is among the middle-income countries that are addressing the smoking epidemic through public health programs (17). (88.3%) from participants were found to use topical and phototherapy, this result agrees with a study pointed out by (18) that shows the patients were receiving local and/or systemic treatment(s) for psoriasis in a ratio (85.7%).

Most of the patients were pre-obese depending on the WHO classification of BMI which agree with a study done by (19) that found 74.5% had a body mass index (BMI) above 25. BMI is 25 to 29.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup> for Patients classified as overweight or pre-obese while for those with obesity, BMI exceeds 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>(20).

Regarding the psychological disorders among the patients with psoriasis, it is apparently that about the half (45%) of the study sample suffering from shame and (16.7%) suffering from depression. This result agree with study conducted by (21) that refer to psoriasis patients suffering from a sense of stigma, a decrease in the level of quality of life, and a decrease in the level of satisfaction with life, and it was found that self-care education reduces the sense of shame. Patient self-care is one of the duties of the nursing staff because it is important in achieving the patient's well-being and improving health (22). Self-care is individuals, families, and communities the ability to health promotion, disease prevention, health maintenance, illness and disability coping with or without healthcare providers' support (23). Among healthcare workers in each hospital, the most significant function played by the nurses (24). essential and important steps to arrive objective can be done by educational programs for life style (25)

Another study find shame, stigma, social anxiety and low self-esteem are problems that can result from changing the appearance of patients with skin diseases, in particular psoriasis (26). Also, scores for anxiety, depression, social avoidance and distress increased With psoriasis progression, and the difference was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) (27).

## Conclusion

Depending on the study result there is a significant correlation between the psychological status and psoriasis disease.

## Recommendation

More studies about psoriasis impact on psychological status. Educational programs should be provided for patients with psoriasis about self-care to follow healthy habits lead to control of disease complications and increase the quality of life and decrease consequences of psoriasis disease.

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