

## Predictors of QOL in Adults with Acne: The Contribution of Perceived Stigma

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### Introduction

**Background:** As dermatology patients complain that their psychological distress is extensive and often overlooked (Butler et al., 2011), it is concerning that there is a paucity of research investigating factors associated with acne-related quality of life (Clark-Carter et al., 2009).

**Purpose of Study:** To compile a preliminary list of risk factors for psychosocial distress as a result of having acne in adulthood, while specifically examining the role of perceived stigma – due to the high levels of stigmatization reported by individuals with visible differences (Borah & Rankin, 2003).

**Research Question:** What is the predictive capacity of perceived stigma, self-rated severity, location and previous history of acne, gender, age, relationship status and education for the quality of life of adult dermatology patients?

### Methodology

#### Participants:

- ✓ (N=119, M/F: 38/81; mean age: M = 26.37, SD = 7.97)
- ✓ Six private dermatologists were asked to distribute questionnaires to their patients with acne
- ✓ Convenience sampling
- ✓ Inclusion criteria: current acne sufferers aged 18+
- ✓ Exclusion criteria: current diagnosis of mental illness

#### Measures:

- ✓ General Background Questionnaire
- ✓ Feelings of Stigmatization Questionnaire (FSQ; Ginsburg & Link, 1989): 32 items which measure feelings of perceived stigma in individuals with psoriasis and eczema
- ✓ Acne-specific Quality of Life Questionnaire (Acne-QoL; Botek et al., 2001): 19 items divided into three domains (self-perception, role social and role emotional) which measure QOL among individuals with facial acne

#### Procedure:

- ✓ Test Modification & Cultural Adaptation
- ✓ Reliability Analysis of culturally adapted FSQ (Chronbach's  $\alpha = .85$ ) and Acne-QOL (Chronbach's alpha ranged from .84 to .94)
- ✓ Data Collection & Analysis

### Results

- ✓ Participants reported:
- ✓ Moderate levels of perceived stigma (M=116.34, SD=19.58);
- ✓ Good to very good self-perception ratings (M=20.34, SD=7.16);
- ✓ Good to very good role-social ratings (M=17.67, SD=6.21);
- ✓ Good to very good role-emotional ratings (M=19.63, SD= 6.86);

#### Multiple Regression Analyses:

##### 1. Variables Predicting Acne-QoL D.1: Self-Perception

- ✓ The eight independent variables explained 48.9% of the variance of self-perception,  $R^2 = .489$ ,  $F(8,110) = 13.17$ ,  $p < .001$ .
- ✓ Four of the independent variables contributed significantly to the prediction of self-perception: perceived stigma ( $b = .54$ ,  $p < .001$ ); self-rated severity of acne ( $b = -.25$ ,  $p < .01$ ); gender ( $b = -.19$ ,  $p < .05$ ); and age ( $b = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

##### 2. Variables Predicting Acne-QoL D.2: Role Social

- ✓ The eight independent variables explained 53.5% of the variance of role-social,  $R^2 = .535$ ,  $F(8,110) = 15.80$ ,  $p < .001$ .
- ✓ Three of the independent variables contributed significantly to the prediction of role-social: perceived stigma ( $b = .64$ ,  $p < .001$ ); self-rated severity of acne ( $b = -.24$ ,  $p < .01$ ); and history of acne ( $b = -.17$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

##### 3. Variables Predicting Acne-QoL D.3: Role Emotional

- ✓ The eight independent variables explained 52.5% of the variance of role-emotional,  $R^2 = .525$ ,  $F(8,110) = 15.17$ ,  $p < .001$ .
- ✓ Three of the independent variables contributed significantly to the prediction of role-social: perceived stigma ( $b = .57$ ,  $p < .001$ ); self-rated severity of acne ( $b = -.30$ ,  $p < .001$ ); and gender ( $b = -.19$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

### Conclusions

- ✓ This research study provides preliminary evidence that adults who feel stigmatized are at risk for experiencing a poor quality of life as a result of having acne;
- ✓ Potential risk factors of secondary importance may include one's self-rated severity of acne, age, gender and previous history of acne;
- ✓ These risk factors can be clinically useful in providing red flags for dermatologists treating adults with acne.

### References

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