Quality of life in atopic dermatitis: the patient perspective

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**Introduction:** Atopic Dermatitis (AD) is a cutaneous disease affecting all ages and demographics. Even in an era of biological treatments, many patients continue to struggle with disease factors that influence their overall quality of life.

**Objectives:** This study aims to highlight perceived influential factors related to QOL in atopic dermatitis from patient-reported experiences.

**Methods:** This study is an IRB-approved cross-sectional survey of patients with a diagnosis of atopic dermatitis at a single academic institution. The survey was conducted via phone calls. Patients were asked to self-report information related to their diagnosis, comorbidities, residential community, and factors that contribute to quality of life. Statistical analysis was performed with SPSS.

**Results:** Sixty-four patients agreed to participate in the survey, with a response rate of 78%. Responders were mostly female (55%) with a mean age of 41 and were racially diverse (White/Caucasian 48%, Black or African American 36%, and Asian or Asian American 16%). Self-reported disease severity was labeled as mild (17%), moderate (33%), or severe (50%). Many patients had psychiatric comorbidities (anxiety 39%, depression 22%). Subjective feelings of being less attractive or less confident due to AD were significant on logistic regression in those with severe disease (\(p=0.048\), OR 2.78, CI (1.0-7.6) and female gender (\(p=0.007\)). The severe group also reported experiencing prior judgment or discrimination (63%) and felt their work or school performance had been affected by their AD (47%), more commonly in males (\(p=0.026\)). Differences in race were not significant. Most patients reported itch as being the most bothersome symptom (66%). When asked to choose the top factors contributing to their quality of life related to their AD, symptom burden was the most common (88%) followed by time spent obtaining medical care (45%), and treatment regimen difficulty (39%). More than one in every ten patients (16%) reported that their life goals or dreams had been affected by their disease.

**Conclusion:** The psychosocial implications of atopic dermatitis remain a significant barrier to patient-perceived quality of life. While symptomatic management remains a large proponent of barriers to QOL improvement, perceived stigmatization anecdotally affects those with AD to a significant degree. Further studies and interventions are needed to discern specific areas of improvement for QOL in atopic dermatitis.

**Keywords:** atopic dermatitis, eczema, quality of life, patient survey, moderate-to-severe, adult

**Acknowledgements/Funding:** N/A