Lack of publications assessing patient impact of vitiligo and alopecia areata

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Introduction/Background: Vitiligo and alopecia areata (AA) are immune-mediated diseases which have unpredictable disease courses.¹,² The profound psychosocial impact of vitiligo and AA is often under recognised despite association with elevated incidence of psychological disorders¹,²; the perceived burden frequently remains driven by cosmetic considerations.¹,³ Improved awareness and understanding of the burden of vitiligo and AA by healthcare professionals is needed,¹,² however, both have been the subject of limited clinical research.

Objectives: Here, we characterise publications on the disease burden of vitiligo and AA, relative to other major immune-mediated dermatological diseases.

Methods: A PubMed search (limited to English language with available abstract) identified articles on disease burden in vitiligo, AA, psoriasis, atopic dermatitis (AD), systemic sclerosis (SS), and hidradenitis suppurativa (HS) (01JAN2014–31DEC2023). Analysis of cross-indication data was conducted for article type, clinical research phase, and articles behind paywall. Relevant vitiligo and AA abstracts underwent further analysis regarding disease burden and provision of enhanced publication content (EPC)/plain language summary (PLS).

Results: Of 2002 publications, 3% were related to vitiligo (N=68) and 4% to AA (N=78), compared to psoriasis (45%), AD (30%), SS (11%), and HS (7%). A similar proportion of articles across all diseases were clinical trials (vitiligo and AA: 3.4%; other diseases: 4.2%) and behind paywall (38%; 43%). Among the
relevant vitiligo (n=21) and AA (n=39) articles on disease burden, 57% and 51% focused on QoL burden, respectively, followed by 19% on psychological comorbidities for vitiligo and 21% on economic impact for AA. Far fewer articles addressed immune-mediated comorbidities, burden of treatment, and physical symptoms. Findings revealed limited PLS/EPC availability.

**Conclusions:** Compared with other immune-mediated dermatological diseases, vitiligo and AA are underserved with limited published data characterising disease burden. Accessible publications addressing all aspects of disease burden are required to provide a holistic understanding of patient experiences and aid in shifting perceptions of vitiligo and AA.

**References**


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