

Patient satisfaction with treatments for moderate-to-severe atopic dermatitis according to degree and speed of skin and itch improvements: results from a patient survey in the United States

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Introduction/Background: Atopic dermatitis (AD) is a chronic, inflammatory disease characterized by sensitive and dry skin, eczematous lesions, and intense pruritus. Patients with moderate-to-severe AD often require systemic treatments if their symptoms are insufficiently controlled with topical treatments or phototherapy. While numerous systemic therapies are currently available for moderate-to-severe AD, more data evaluating patient satisfaction with various characteristics of these treatments are needed to help guide physicians and their patients with joint treatment decision-making.

Objectives: To investigate patient satisfaction with AD treatments according to the degree and speed of itch improvement and the degree of skin clearance.

Methods: A cross-sectional, web-based survey was used to evaluate patient preferences for characteristics associated with systemic AD therapies. Respondents were required to have a physician-confirmed diagnosis of AD (currently moderate or severe), to be aged ≥ 18 years, to be a United States resident, and to read and understand English. Assessments included worst itch experienced in the past 24 hours (using a scale from 0–10, with 0 defined as no itch and 10 defined as the worst imaginable itch); time to noticeable itch reduction following initiation of their current treatment (1–6 days, 7–13 days, or ≥ 14 days); and the amount of body surface area still affected by AD ($\leq 2\%$, $3\%–10\%$, or $> 10\%$; patient-assessed). Patient satisfaction with itch improvement, speed of itch improvement, and skin clearance with their current treatment was also assessed and classified into 3 categories: satisfied, dissatisfied, or neither. *P* values were determined by Chi-square tests (or Fisher Exact test where appropriate).

Results: Of the 213 individuals recruited by physicians to participate in the survey, 200 respondents fulfilled the eligibility criteria, consented to participate, and completed surveys. A total of 186 respondents indicated that they were currently receiving treatment for their AD; treatments included over-the counter creams, ointments, or

medicines (26.9%, n = 50); prescription creams (72.0%, n = 134); oral corticosteroids (16.7%, n = 31); or dupilumab (11.3%, n = 21). Treatment satisfaction differed based on the patient's itch level within the past 24 hours ($P < .001$): 85.2% (n = 23) of the 27 patients reporting the lowest levels of itch (0–1) indicated they were satisfied with their current treatment, whereas only 7.1% (n = 1) of the 14 patients reporting the worst levels of itch (8–10) were satisfied with their current treatment. Among the 73 respondents who experienced the fastest itch reduction (within 1–6 days), 65.8% (n = 48) were satisfied with their treatment. For the 36 respondents experiencing itch reduction ≥ 14 days post treatment, 13.9% (n = 5) were satisfied with their treatment ($P < .001$). Of the 75 respondents with the highest degree of skin clearance ($\leq 2\%$ of body surface area still affected), 65.3% (n = 49) were satisfied with their treatment. Among the 21 respondents with the lowest degree of skin clearance ($> 10\%$ of body surface area still affected), 14.3% (n = 3) were satisfied with their treatment ($P < .001$). Safety was not evaluated, which may limit the findings in this analysis.

Conclusions: In patients with moderate-to-severe AD, the majority of respondents experiencing the lowest levels of itch, the fastest onset of itch improvement, and the highest degree of skin clearance also reported satisfaction with their current treatment. These findings underscore the stringent thresholds for both the degree and speed of symptom improvement required to achieve patient satisfaction. This highlights patients' desire for treatments offering both rapid and extensive itch reduction and skin clearance and may help broaden physicians' understanding of patient preferences and inform treatment decisions.

Keywords: atopic dermatitis, itch improvement, patient satisfaction, skin clearance

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