

PP 25

Psychological Distress related to Acne among Young Adults who are Attending to the Dermatologic Clinic at the National Hospital of Sri Lanka

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Background: Acne is a common visible skin disease affecting a considerable percentage of the world population with the highest prevalence in the younger generation. It is known to cause a significant psychological impact including anxiety, depression, and stress in adolescents and young adults.

Objectives: To assess the psychological distress related to acne among young adults who attend the dermatologic clinic at the National Hospital of Sri Lanka (NHSL).

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among conveniently selected 113 patients (young adults, 18-35 years), attended the dermatology clinic at NHSL to seek treatments for acne problems. The questionnaire was converted to a google form and the link to the questionnaire was circulated among the participants using social media platforms. Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale (DASS 21) which was validated for Sri Lankan context, was used to measure the psychological distress of the participants. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse data using SPSS version 25.0.

Results: Among the participants, 70.8% belonged to the 27-30 years age category, 79.6% were females and 49.6% were unmarried. Most of them were employed (74.3%) and nearly half of the participants (54.0%) were educated up to GCE A/L. The majority of them (75.2%) were diagnosed with acne 5 years ago. Pimples (pustules) appeared on the face of 85.8% of the participants. Among the participants 85.0% reported normal, 10.6% mild, 3.5% moderate and 0.9% severe depression. Normal, mild, moderate, severe, and most severe anxiety levels among the participants were 67.2%, 12.4%, 11.5%, 6.2%, and 2.7%, respectively. Among the participants 92.0% had normal, 7.1% mild and 0.9% moderate stress levels.

Conclusions: The findings of the study revealed a considerable psychological influence including anxiety, depression, and stress related to acne among young adults who attend the dermatologic clinic at NHSL. Early and effective interventions are necessary to manage patients with acne who suffer from psychological impairments.

Keywords: *Acne, Anxiety, Depression, Stress, Young adults*