

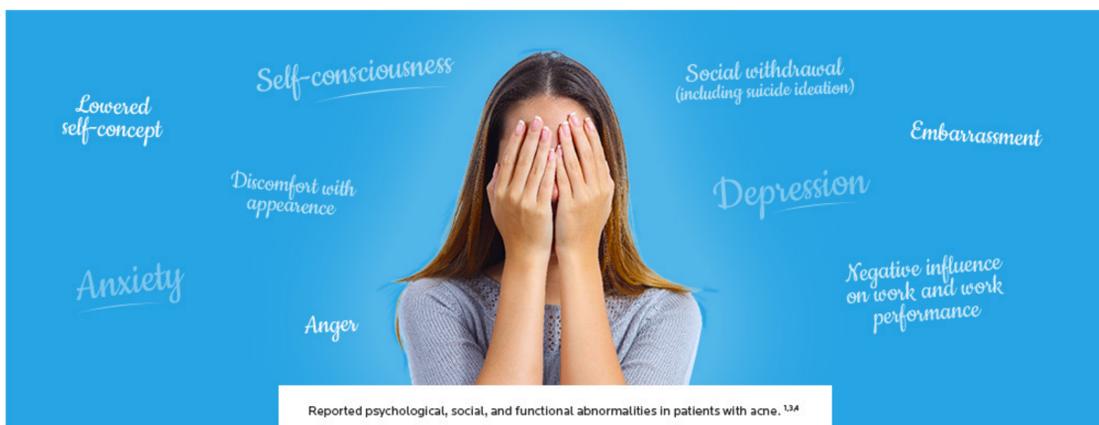
How and why should you consider the Quality of Life (QoL) of acne patients?

ACNE BASIC

In the 21st century, people's perceptions have changed, with appearance and by extension the condition of their skin becoming an important indicator of QoL.¹ Because skin is our largest organ, it is directly exposed to environmental factors leading to dermatological diseases, with various morphological changes in the skin resulting in a considerable reduction in overall QoL.¹

Acne: a disease that significantly affects patients' QoL

Acne is a chronic inflammatory skin disorder often characterized by noticeable lesions. Although acne does not compromise general health, it can have a negative impact on patients' QoL due to skin changes, post-acne scars or hyperpigmentation.



Reported psychological, social, and functional abnormalities in patients with acne.^{1,3,4}

Irrespective of age, acne patients report similar emotional effects to patients with psoriasis, which is traditionally regarded as the skin condition causing greatest disability.⁵ Literature shows that acne patients experience social, psychological, and emotional dilemmas comparable to those reported by patients with epilepsy, chronic disabling asthma, arthritis, diabetes, and back pain.^{2,4,7}

Impact of acne on QoL: adults may be more affected

It is a social handicap affecting more than **90% of the adolescent population**. But they are not the only one affected: acne continues into **adulthood in 12% to 14%** of patients.²

Older acne patients report significantly greater overall effects on their QoL than younger patients, even when controlling for the clinical severity of acne as judged by the dermatologist.⁵

In fact, the psychosocial effects of acne on QoL are thought to be influenced more by patients' perception of their acne than by the objective disease severity.⁵

QoL: don't forget the impact of acne complications

Unfortunately, in addition to acne itself, a common complication is residual post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH), which causes further psychological and social distress in affected patients.²

PIH can be defined as inflammation-induced melanin release that appears after inflammatory skin disorders. It occurs more frequently and more noticeably in patients with darker skin tones (Fitzpatrick skin types III/IV-VI) compared to fair skin tones (Fitzpatrick skin types I/II).²



Although many patients with PIH will heal naturally, recovery may take several months to years. In severe cases, PIH can be permanent, causing greater distress for affected patients. Therefore, it is important to note that post-acne PIH can be as embarrassing as the acne itself and lead to a lower QoL for affected patients.²

Impact of acne on QoL: how to measure it

As with other diseases, QoL measures in acne patients can supplement clinical severity in comprehensively assessing the patient experience and disease and treatment outcomes.^{3,6}

General questionnaires such as Skindex-29, Skindex-Teen and Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI) are used in estimating the QoL of acne patients. Several acne-specific psychometric instruments have also been developed.^{4,6}

TITLE	COUNTRY, YEAR
Acne Disability Index (ADI)	UK, 1989
Acne-Specific Quality of Life Questionnaire (Acne-QoL)	USA, 1996
Dermatology-Specific Quality of Life Instrument for Acne (DSQL - AC)	USA, 1997
Assessment of the Psychological and Social Effects of Acne (APSEA)	UK, 1997
Acne Quality of Life (AQOL)	Canada, 1998

The Acne-QoL is probably the most famous questionnaire all over the world, but it was developed specifically as an acne specific psychometric instrument for clinical trials. For routine clinical practice, a shorter tool as the Cardiff Acne Disability Index (CADI) may be used.

Improving the QoL of acne patients: solutions are available

In 2016, a study involving 101 acne patients confirmed that dermocosmetics and adapted make-up offering effective lesions coverage significantly increase QoL alongside improvement in the skin's condition.

Even after small changes to the skin, they report the first signs of improved QoL and family relationships.¹

Note

La Roche-Posay launched corrective makeup workshops twenty years ago. Today, 150 are available worldwide, helping patients overcome the often confidence-crippling effects of visible skin conditions. To find out more about corrective makeup workshops ([Click here](#))

Therefore, the problem of acne management should be considered multi-dimensionally, with a holistic approach and close cooperation of a multidisciplinary team (dermatologist, psychologist, etc.) being crucial.¹

GOING FURTHER

The Acne-QoL

The Acne-QoL was the first validated disease-specific questionnaire suitable for use in facial acne clinical trials to have its psychometric properties soundly documented. Its development was based on questions suggested by subjects with acne, who were consulted during the item generation, item reduction, and pilot testing.⁴

It is a 19-item patient-reported outcome measure evaluating the impact of facial acne. The questionnaire has four sections: self-perception, role – emotional, role – social, and symptoms, with each item scored from 0 to 6 based on response selections ranging from extreme (or extensive) to not at all (or none).

Still used and approved by experts, it is reliable, valid and able to distinguish differences across severity groups and improvement over therapy.^{4,7}

SELF PERCEPTION

- Feel unattractive
- Feel embarrassed
- Feel self-conscious
- Dissatisfied with self appearance
- Self-confidence negatively affected

ROLE-EMOTIONAL

- Feel upset
- Feel annoyed about time spent treating face
- Worried about not looking your best
- Worried about medication not working fast enough
- Feel bothered about needing to have medication/cover-up available

ROLE-SOCIAL

- Worried about meeting new people
- Worried about going out in public
- Problem with socializing
- Problem with interacting with the opposite sex (or same sex if gay or lesbian)

ACNE SYMPTOMS

- Bumps on face
- Bumps full of pus
- Scabbing from acne
- Worried about scarring from acne
- Oily skin

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