



GLOBAL SKIN HEALTH

## ANALYSIS OF PATIENTS' WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL FOR DERMATOLOGIC CARE

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**Background:** With respect to health care planning, it is commonly assumed that patients consult the nearest physician. In reality, however, patients frequently accept greater efforts/expenses than necessary to see a physician. There is only little knowledge about the influence of individual and sociodemographic characteristics determining patients' choice of their dermatologist.

**Objective:** The objective of the study was to determine under which circumstances patients were willing to accept additional efforts/expenses, and which role sociodemographic and clinical characteristics play in this regard.

**Methods:** Data collection was carried out as a multicenter cross-sectional study among office-based and hospital-affiliated dermatologists. Patients (n = 309) with psoriasis and chronic wounds were surveyed about their mobility patterns and disease severity. Data analysis was performed using descriptive and multivariate methods.

**Results:** Comparing both diagnoses showed that psoriasis patients usually traveled longer distances than wound patients. Among psoriasis patients, one significant predictor for accepting additional efforts/expenses was the level of education. With regard to wound patients, key factors included wound size (severity). The decision to visit a physician is primarily influenced by the physicians' competence, his range of service and the physician-patient relationship. The perspective of a better therapy as well as worsening of quality of life are responsible for a higher motivation to travel a longer distance to the physician.

**Conclusion:** The present study revealed complex mobility patterns among patients, which are affected by numerous personal as well as clinical factors. The results show that a significant proportion of patients are willing to travel longer distances than necessary. Depending on the diagnosis and individual preferences, additional efforts/expenses can – among other things – be explained by disease severity.

