



HAIR DISORDERS

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF ALOPECIA AREATA

Suchana Marahatta⁽¹⁾ - Sudha Agrawal⁽²⁾ - Baikuntha Adhikari⁽³⁾

B. P. Koirala Institute Of Health Sciences (bpkihs), Dermatology & Venereology, Dharan, Nepal⁽¹⁾ - Bpkihs, Dermatology & Venereology, Dharan, Nepal⁽²⁾ - Bpkihs, Psychiatry, Dharan, Nepal⁽³⁾

Introduction: Alopecia areata (AA) is one of the commonest causes of non-scarring alopecia. Since hair is a vital part with very high cosmetic concern, AA might have significant negative impact on patient's mental health, which may further worsen the disease condition. Hence treating physician must be aware of its psychological impacts.

Objective: To investigate depression & anxiety in AA patients.

Materials and Methods: A total of 75 consecutive patients of AA were interviewed over a year period in the dermatology outpatient department. Relevant history and examination findings were recorded in the preset pro-forma. For the assessment of depression and anxiety; Nepali version of Beck Depression Inventory and Beck Anxiety Inventory were used respectively.

Results: Mean age of the patient was 29.40±9.90 years, with male and female ratio being 1.14:1. Among 75 patients, prevalence of depression and anxiety were 66.7% and 73.3% respectively with median depression score= 5 (IQR=0.0-10.0) and median anxiety score= 5 (IQR=0.0-11.0). Amongst depressed ones, 82.0% had minimal and 18.0% had moderate depression, while none of them had severe depression. Similarly, 89.0% AA patient had mild and 11.0% had moderate anxiety, while none of them had severe anxiety. But, AA severity did not have any co-relation with depression and anxiety severity.

Conclusions: Anxiety and depression are common psychological problems in AA patients. Since most of the patients had mild to moderate psychological impact, they are likely to be missed if keen attention is not given. But, this might be significantly affecting the AA disease status and its treatment outcome. Hence, we must be aware of them; and we should counsel our patients for timely psychiatry consultation for the maximum benefit.

