



PSYCHODERMATOLOGY

PREVALENCE AND RECOGNITION OF DEPRESSION IN DERMATOLOGICAL PATIENTS OF A TERTIARY HOSPITAL IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL

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INTRODUCTION: Skin diseases are rarely fatal, but they can directly influence the mood, emotions and quality of life of dermatological patients. The overall prevalence of mental disorders in patients with skin disease has been reported to be as high as 60% and depression is one of the most prevalent disease. Depressed patients may consult dermatologists with vague complaints and may not have their mood symptoms identified.

OBJECTIVE: The aim of this study was to evaluate the prevalence of depression among general dermatology patients and verify the proportion of patients with previous psychiatric diagnosis and treatment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: We conducted a cross-sectional study of adults with various skin diseases who visited an outpatient clinic of a tertiary hospital in Southern Brazil. We used the Beck Depression Inventory to screen for depression.

RESULTS: A total of 329 patients were interviewed. The prevalence of depression was 39.8%, and, of these patients, only 19,1% were on regular psychiatric treatment. The skin complaints most associated with depression were benign neoplasms and alopecia. About 10% of depressed patients had suicidal ideation and severe depression was more common in patients with psoriasis ($p=,004$).

CONCLUSIONS: The prevalence of depression in dermatological patients is larger than in the general population. Our data, in a Southern brazilian sample of general dermatology patients, showed that most of these patients do not have their psychiatric diagnosis recognized and treated. It is important that dermatologists identify depressive symptoms and thus provide adequate treatment and improve the quality of life of their patients.

