

PSYCHODERMATOLOGY

PSYCHIATRIC MORBIDITY AMONG PATIENTS ATTENDING THE DERMATOLOGY CLINIC OF UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT TEACHING HOSPITAL.

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Introduction: Increased frequency of psychiatric and emotional health problems have been reported among patients with dermatological lesions. These problems could negatively affect the quality of life of these patients.

Objectives: The aim of the study was to evaluate the psychiatric morbidity among patients attending the dermatology clinic of UPTH. It also sought to determine the relationship between socio-demographic factors and psychiatric morbidity.

Methodology: This was a cross sectional study consisting of 63 consecutively recruited patients attending the dermatological clinic of University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH). Consenting patients filled the study questionnaire which consisted of a socio-demographic questionnaire, general health questionnaire (GHQ-12) and a perceived stigma scale. A GHQ score of ≥ 3 was considered as having psychiatric morbidity. They were further interviewed using the anxiety and depression modules of the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview. Data was analysed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20. A p- value of less than 0.05 was considered significant.

Results: The mean age of the patients was 30.3 ± 13.4 years with a male to female ratio of 1:2. The prevalence of psychiatric morbidity was 36.5% while the prevalence of perceived stigma was 46.0%. There was no significant relationship noticed between socio-demographic characteristics of the patients and the presence of psychological morbidity or perceived stigma ($p > 0.05$). Among those with psychiatric morbidity, five (21.7%) had depression while seven (30.4%) had anxiety disorder.

Conclusion: Psychiatric morbidity is common among patients with dermatological lesions irrespective of their socio-demographic characteristics. There is a need to ensure that the psychosocial care of patients who attend the dermatologic outpatient clinic is inculcated into the routine management of these patients.