

ACCEPTANCE OF PEOPLE WITH DERMATOLOGICAL DISEASES ACCORDING TO STUDENTS

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Abstract: Introduction. Dermatological diseases are located on the skin surface, which fulfils various roles of significant importance. It is for the organism, among others, the protective barrier, element of interpersonal communication as well as means of receiving and expressing emotions. According to patients, the worst diseases are those which are visible to the surrounding, i.e. dermatological diseases.

The aim of the article was the assessment of acceptance level of people with dermatological diseases conducted by students depending on the respondents' sex.

Material and methods. In the work, the diagnostic survey method was adopted with the use of self-prepared questionnaire. The studies were conducted among the students of Lomza University of Applied Sciences. The research group constituted 200 people (124 women and 76 men).

Results. 67.5% of respondents claimed that they are not afraid of the contact with a person with a skin disease. According to 54.8% of women and 39.4% of men, people with dermatological diseases are afraid of lack of acceptance by healthy persons. 30.6% of women and 42.1% of men stated that people with dermatological diseases are also in fear of rejection. 64.5% of women and 77.6% of men claimed that those with dermatological diseases are discriminated against. However, 51.6% of women and 46% of men stated that people with skin diseases can work in public professions.

Conclusions. **1.** The level of acceptance of people with dermatological diseases conducted by the students was high. **2.** The majority of students claimed that they are not afraid of contact with a person with skin lesions. **3.** Women revealed a slightly higher level of acceptance of people with skin problems than men.

Key words: acceptance, dermatological diseases, stigmatization.

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Introduction

Dermatological diseases constitute a popular phenomenon occurring among the society and affect people of all ages. They are located on skin surface, which leads to frequent psychological and social problems of patients suffering from it. Diagnosing these kinds of diseases is linked with a long-term process of treatment as well as problems connected with aesthetic nature of a disease. The lesions visible on skin hinder people from finding jobs in public institutions and disturb relationships with healthy people. Fast medical diagnosis and well adjusted treatment have a significant influence on the course of disease.

The aim of the work was the assessment of acceptance level of people with dermatological diseases conducted by students depending on the respondents' sex.

Material and research methodology

The studies were conducted among the students of Lomza University of Applied Sciences. The research group was composed jointly by 200 students, 124 women and 76 men. The students of medical faculties were not included in the research.

In order to conduct research, the diagnostic survey research method was adopted and a self-prepared questionnaire was used as a research tool. The questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first part – the essential, included 24 closed questions pertaining to the issue under consideration. The second part – contained respondents' particulars such as: sex, age, place of residence, faculty.

The questionnaire was anonymous. The participation in the research was voluntary. The obtained data were elaborated in a quantitative form.

Results

The studies were conducted among 124 women (62%) and 76 men (38%). The group was divided in terms of age into two subgroups: from 24 year of age (48%) as well as above 24 years of age (52%). The surveyed people came from urban (58%) as well as rural (42%) environment.

In the initial part of the research, the frequency of students' contact with people affected with skin problems was the factor that could have conditioned further answers. 43.5% of women stated that they frequently meet people with skin problems and only 4.1% of them avoid contact with the dermatologically ill. 50% of men, however, answered

red that they equally frequently often meet such people and 3.9% of them avoid such meetings.

When asked about the discrimination of people with skin problems, 64.5% of women and 77.6% of men stated that they are discriminated against in the society (Table 1).

Table 1: Discrimination of people with skin problems according to the respondents.

Can a person with skin problems feel discriminated against by others?	Women		Men		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	80	64,5	59	77,6	139
No	12	9,7	7	9,2	19
No idea	32	25,8	10	13,2	42
Total	124	100%	76	100%	200

According to 54.8% of women, dermatologically ill people are afraid of the lack of acceptance by the healthy. However, 42.1% of men stated that the people mostly fear that they may be rejected (Table 2).

Table 2: Fears of people with dermatological diseases in respondents' opinions.

According to you, what are people with dermatological diseases afraid of?	Women		Men		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Rejection	38	30,6	32	42,1	70
Lack of acceptance by healthy people	68	54,8	30	39,4	98
Acceptance as the appearance does not matter	15	12,1	12	15,9	27
I am not interested in others as I care about myself.	3	2,5	2	2,6	5
Total	124	100%	76	100%	200

The vast majority of respondents (over 80%) of both sexes claimed that people with dermatological diseases should not be isolated from the healthy. Only 4.5% of all the respondents stated that such people should be isolated.

Also to the question about holding public functions by people with skin problems, 51.6% of women and 46% of men stated that those people should work on such posts (Table 3).

Over 60% of surveyed women and men are not afraid of the contact with dermatologically ill people. However, 21.7% of women and 17.1% of men are in fear of being infected after contact with such a person (Table 4).

50% of women and 40.7% of men claimed that they would go with a dermatologically ill person for a social meeting. However, 13.7% of women and 17.1% of men stated that they would not attend such a meeting. But as many as 36.3% of female students and 42.2% of male students did not take any stance on it.

Table 3: Holding public functions (e.g. clerk, police officer, salesperson) by people with skin diseases.

Do you think that a person with a skin disease can hold public function (e.g. clerk, police officer, salesperson)?	Women		Men		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	64	51,6	35	46,0	99
No	17	13,7	17	22,4	34
No opinion	43	34,7	24	31,6	67
Total	124	100%	76	100%	200

Table 4: Fears of respondents while contacting people with dermatological diseases.

What are you afraid of in contact with dermatologically ill people?	Women		Men		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
That after such a contact I can become ill	27	21,7	13	17,1	40
What will others think about me	12	9,6	7	9,2	19
I am not afraid of contact with such people	77	62,3	53	69,8	130
Those people are 'dirty' for me	8	6,4	3	3,9	11
Total	124	100%	76	100%	200

40.3% of female students and 27.6% of male students answered that they would go on a swimming pool/beach with people affected by skin problems. 23.3% of women and 32.8% of men declared that on the contrary, they would never go on a swimming pool with such a person. While 36.5% of women and 39.6% of men did not know their reaction to the proposal of spending their leisure time in a public place together.

To the question of choosing life partner – 45.1% of women and 48.6% of men answered that they do not and did not put much attention to their partner's appearance. However, 39.5% of student did not have any opinion on this matter.

On the basis of data analysis, 37.9% of women and 38.1% of men gain knowledge on the subject of dermatological diseases from the Internet. 24.2% of women and 25% of men obtain such information from their relatives (Table 5).

Among the people surveyed, 70% of women as well as men expressed willingness to extend the level of knowledge on dermatological diseases. 10.5% of the respondents of both sexes answered that they are not interested in gaining knowledge on the issue.

Discussion and results review

Dermatological diseases are connected with the occurrence of skin lesions. They are characterized by a chronic course and have negative influence on various aspects of an

Table 5: Sources of obtaining information on dermatological diseases.

How do you gain knowledge on dermatological diseases?	Women		Men		Total N
	N	%	N	%	
From the Internet	47	37,9	29	38,1	76
From acquaintances, friends, family	30	24,2	19	25,0	49
From television, newspapers, magazines	24	19,3	14	18,5	38
From medical books	6	4,8	3	3,9	9
From health service	12	9,7	7	9,2	19
I am not interested in this subject	5	4,1	4	5,3	9
Total	124	100%	76	100%	200

ill person's life, mainly his self-esteem as well as his relation with the surrounding [1, 2].

Due to the fact that the lesions are visible to the surrounding, the ill face the incomprehensible opinions of healthy people. They have many problems of aesthetic and psychical nature. Negative opinions or behaviours of healthy people cause the decrease in self-esteem of the ill and lead to psychological problems [2, 3].

Expressing negative opinions as well as commenting people with skin problems is often caused by lack of or a low level of knowledge on dermatological diseases. It is connected with a strong feeling of stigmatization among people with those kinds of diseases [4].

From the research conducted among the students of Lomza University of Applied Sciences, it can be concluded that 51.7% of women and 52.7% of men assessed their own level of knowledge as poor. The willingness to extend knowledge was expressed by over 70% of students.

According to Jankowiak and Krajewska-Kula, psoriasis is a chronic, recurrent and inflammatory disease, but it is not contagious [5]. Other authors confirm that psoriasis is not contagious. Raising awareness on this subject can result in increasing acceptance of people with dermatological diseases in the society [4].

The result of the conducted research is that 49.2% of women and 56.5% of men stated that it is not possible to become infected by psoriasis. However, about 6% of all the respondents thought that this disease is contagious.

The main processes accompanying the emergence of an ordinary acne are genetic predispositions as well as hormonal changes at the age of adolescence [6]. Thus, it is not impossible to become infected by acne.

According to about 70% of the respondents, it is impossible to become infected by acne. However, about 10% of students thought differently.

Atopic dermatitis is a chronic and recurrent inflammatory dermatitis, pertaining mainly to epidermis and dermis. Mainly the immunological and psychogenic conditions

as well as specific features of the dermis predetermine to the disease emergence [7].

After analysing the results of the conducted research, it was stated that about 25% of students claimed truthfully that it is impossible to become infected by atopic dermatitis. Only about 5% thought that it is possible. The rest of the students did not know whether it is possible or not, as they admitted they have no knowledge on the disease.

Dermatological diseases are very well visible to the surrounding and pertain to the organ of human body – the skin. The appearance of the ill person's skin has a great influence on his self-esteem and relation with the surrounding. According to patients, the worst are the diseases visible to the surrounding. Those diseases restrict professional and family life and impact social contacts. Dermatologically ill people often feel ashamed of and embarrassed with the fact that people surrounding them openly express their opinions on their diseases [1].

Own research revealed that as many as 42.2% of men and 36.3% of women could not decide whether they would go on a social meeting with a person affected by dermatological disease. 13.7% of women and 17.1% of men emphatically stated that they would never go on such a meeting. 40.3% of women and 27.6% of men would attend a public place – such as beach or a swimming pool – with a dermatologically ill person. However, 23.3% of women and 32.8% of men declared otherwise.

Cosmetic defects often result in disorders in emotional sphere and distort social functioning. They also influence the patient's psychic [1].

The conducted studies show that 41.2% of women and 37% of men were not sure if they would be with a dermatologically ill person and about 15% of both sexes definitely stated that their choice of a partner would depend on the appearance.

For the average person, good quality of life is usually connected with health, satisfying family life, high self-esteem, good social contacts, high sense of security and the ability to manage difficult situations. Satisfying all the factors results in the feeling of fulfilment and motivates to further activity. Extending human awareness on dermatological diseases can greatly influence the increase in acceptance and understanding of ill people. Due to this, the ill should not be isolated and people with dermatological diseases should not be forbidden to hold public functions. However, it is necessary to change the society's attitude towards people with dermatological diseases [1, 4]. Many authors note that the ill face the feeling of being condemned and rejected by the society, which makes that they assess their quality of life much worse. The authors also describe the problems occurring when selecting a job. High percentage of people

with dermatological diseases stay jobless due to skin problems [1, 2].

The conducted studies reveal that according to 51.6% of women and 46% of men, people with dermatological diseases should hold public positions. 13.7% of female students and 22.4% of male students thought otherwise.

The diseases often surprise and cause the feeling of helplessness of the ill towards themselves. It often leads to such emotional conditions as loneliness, loss of friends. It can also result in the loss of means necessary to live as well as sense of security. The ill are for those reasons afraid of rejection, lack of acceptance by the healthy and lack of acceptance of the fact that it is who you are that matters, not your appearance [2].

The studies show that according to 54.8% of women, the ill are afraid of not being accepted and according to 42.1% of men, those people are in fear of rejection. However, about 50% of students claimed that the most considerate problem for people with dermatological diseases is the lack of acceptance by people who are healthy.

The frequently met problem in social environment is the discrimination of people with skin problems. It is mainly connected with perceiving not only a person as a human being, but his assessment on the basis of skin appearance and whether it is without any defects. The problems of patients with lesions can be compared to the problems of people with coronary heart disease, asthma or diabetes. It is often linked with the fact that skin problems are visible to the surrounding and thus it influences the psychological sphere of a patient as well as his behaviours and feelings [2, 3].

Family life is very important for the person with lesions, as it is usually adjusted to the ill person. It often causes among the people with dermatological disease psychical disorders, which negatively influence the course of disease. Dermatological problems also impact biological, psychical and social functioning of the ill. Due to the fact that skin problems greatly influence the patient's psychic – much attention should be placed to it. Usually, it is the appearance that influences our perception of self and how others perceive us. Great amount of time and financial resources allocated to improve and sustain own appearance are therefore justified [1, 3].

Conclusions

1. The level of acceptance of people with dermatological diseases conducted by the students was high.
2. The majority of students claimed that they are not afraid of contact with dermatologically ill person.
3. The level of acceptance for people with dermatological diseases was slightly higher with women than men.

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