

Prevalence and risk factors for selfie phobia in people with hidradenitis suppurativa: a worldwide study in 20 countries

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Rational

Social networks have introduced new forms of self-exposure, particularly through selfies. People generally share selfies that show the best version of their physique. With the surge of selfie captures, selfie phobia (SP) has developed, which is characterised by a fear or dislike of taking selfies. Experience of selfie phobia in patients with hidradenitis suppurativa (HS) has so far received minimal attention. The objective of this study was to investigate selfie phobia in patients with selfie phobia and identify predictive factors.

Material and methods

Patients with hidradenitis suppurativa were selected through an online survey of the general population over 18 years of age in 20 countries worldwide. As the study used anonymous data and did not involve clinical examination, institutional review board approval was not required. Hidradenitis suppurativa was self-reported by patients based on a physician's diagnosis. The questionnaire was developed in collaboration with patient organizations and focused on the patient's experience. The questionnaire collected information on the patient's demographic and socio-demographic profile. Respondents were considered to have SP if they reported that their hidradenitis suppurativa had prevented them from taking selfies. A comparison was made between those with and without selfie phobia to assess predictors. These include socio-demographic and clinical characteristics, and the psychological impact on self-esteem, relationships, daily life, social life and work. Qualitative variables are expressed as frequencies and percentages.

Bivariate analyses involving categorical or qualitative variables were performed using the chi-squared test. Quantitative variables were compared using the Student's t-test. The presence of an association between quantitative characteristics was tested using Pearson's correlation coefficient for parameters that followed a normal distribution and Spearman's correlation coefficient for parameters that did not follow a normal distribution. A p-value ≤ 0.05 was considered to indicate a statistically significant difference.

Results

A population of 586 hidradenitis suppurativa respondents was selected, including 302 (51.5%) males and 284 (48.5%) females (mean age 36.05 +/- 11.58, min 16-82 years).

A total of 442 (75.4%) individuals reported selfie phobia. Individuals with selfie phobia were younger (34.7 years vs. 40.21 years, $p < 0.05$). The gender was not associated with selfie phobia (77.8% women vs. 73.2% men, $p < 0.05$). Obesity (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m² (16.4% vs. 19.99%, NS) and facial involvement 31.4% vs 26.1%, NS), were not associated with an increased risk of selfie phobia. Selfie phobia is more common in people who suffer from stigma (Table 1).

Discussion

This study was the first to determine the prevalence of selfie phobia in people with hidradenitis suppurativa. The higher prevalence in younger patients may be related to body image issues. The higher prevalence of selfie phobia in stigmatized people may be explained by dissatisfaction with their appearance.

Conclusion

In the age of social networking, hidradenitis suppurativa causes distress that prevents patients from taking selfies. Selfie phobia should be evaluated in every patient with hidradenitis suppurativa in order to assess the impact on quality of life and take appropriate measures.

Table 1: Expression of stigma in patients suffering from selfie phobia.

	Selfie phobia	Absence Selfie phobia	P-value
<i>Do they sometimes feel left out or rejected by others?</i>	283 (64.0%)	54 (38.0%)	<0.0001
<i>Do they feel that people look at them with disgust?</i>	286 (64.7%)	48 (33.8%)	<0.0001
<i>Do they feel that people avoid touching them?</i>	289 (65.4%)	44 (31.0%)	<0.0001
<i>Do they feel that people avoid approaching them?</i>	270 (61.1%)	44 (31.0%)	<0.0001