

Vitiligo: a worldwide Study on Psychosocial Impact and Therapeutic Challenges of a Stigmatizing Condition: The results of ALL project



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RATIONAL & OBJECTIVES

Vitiligo, a chronic inflammatory skin disorder associated with depigmentation, not only affects the skin but also profoundly influences patients' well-being, extending beyond physical symptoms. The condition often triggers considerable psychological distress, encompassing feelings of diminished self worth and concerns regarding body image, potentially resulting in social seclusion. A comprehensive grasp of vitiligo's psychosocial effects across diverse groups is pivotal for devising inclusive therapeutic approaches.

METHODOLOGY

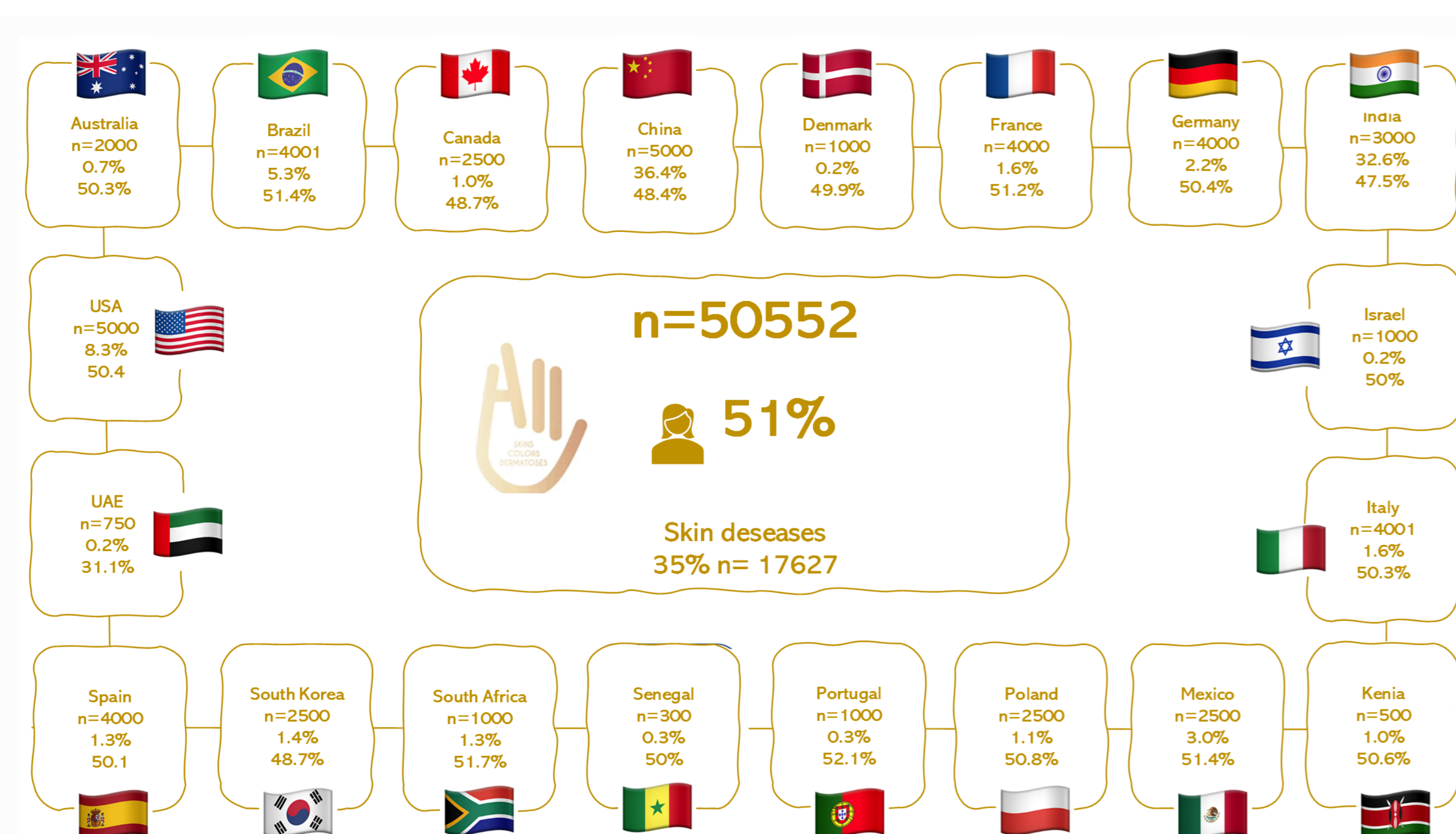
The ALL PROJECT is a large-scale study of individuals representative of the adult population in 20 countries on five continents: Europe [France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Denmark; n=17500], Latin America[LA] [Brazil, Mexico; n=6501], Asia [China, India, South Korea; n=10500], North America [NA] [Canada, USA; n= 7500]; Middle East [ME] [Israel, United Arab Emirates; n=2750], Australia [Australia; n=2000] and Africa [Kenya, South Africa, Senegal; n=1800].

In each of the 20 countries surveyed, representative and extrapolable samples of the general population aged 16 and over were interviewed.

This methodology ensures that the results of the study can be generalized to the entire population of each country included in the project, thus providing a global and diversified perspective of the subjects studied.

Patients reporting only vitiligo as confirmed by a healthcare professional, were identified to avoid attributing effects to another skin condition.

The results were compared using chi-squared or Fisher's exact test. The alpha risk was set at 5% and two tailed tests were used. Statistical analysis was performed using EasyMedStat (version 3.34; www.easymedstat.com).

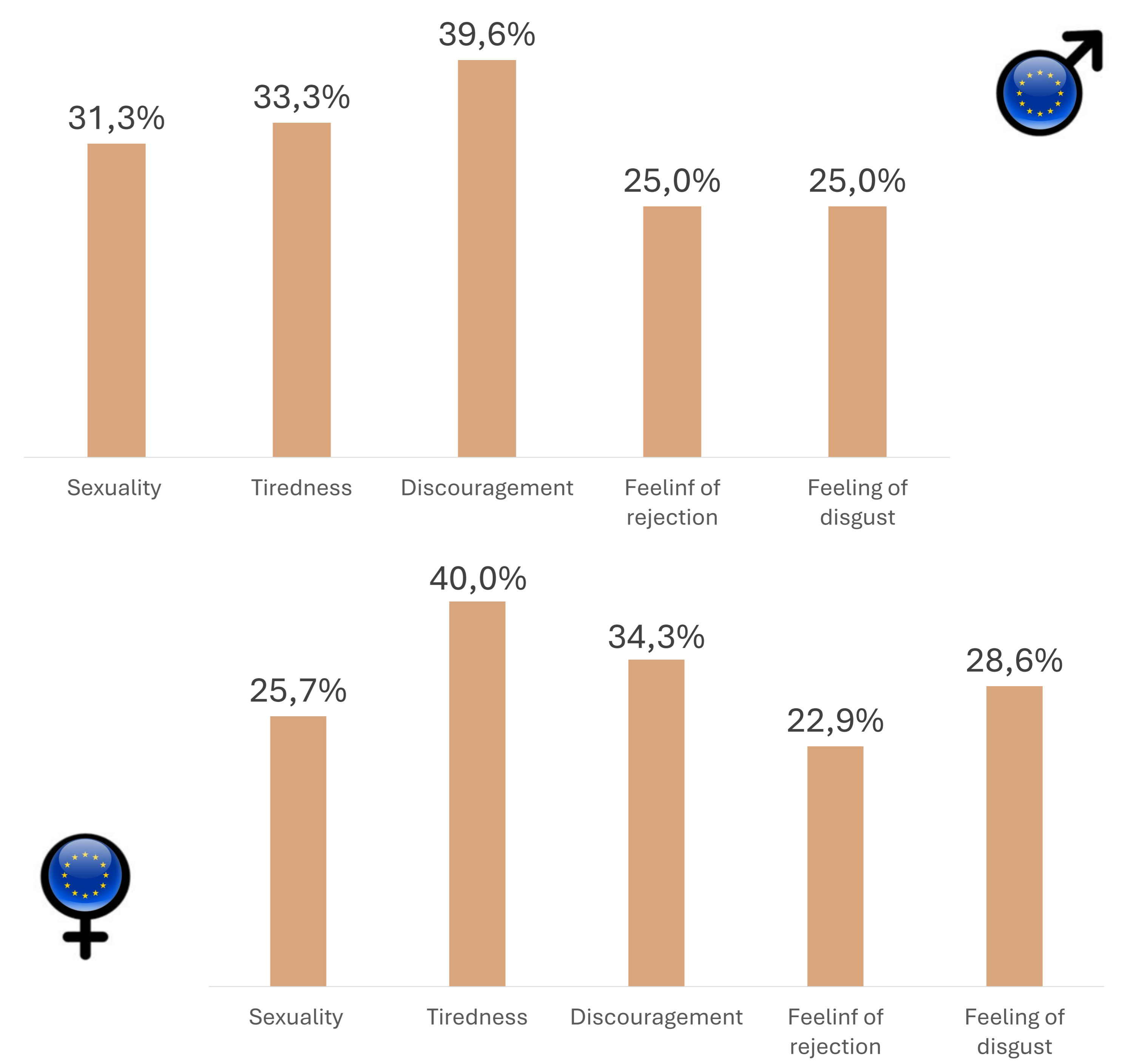
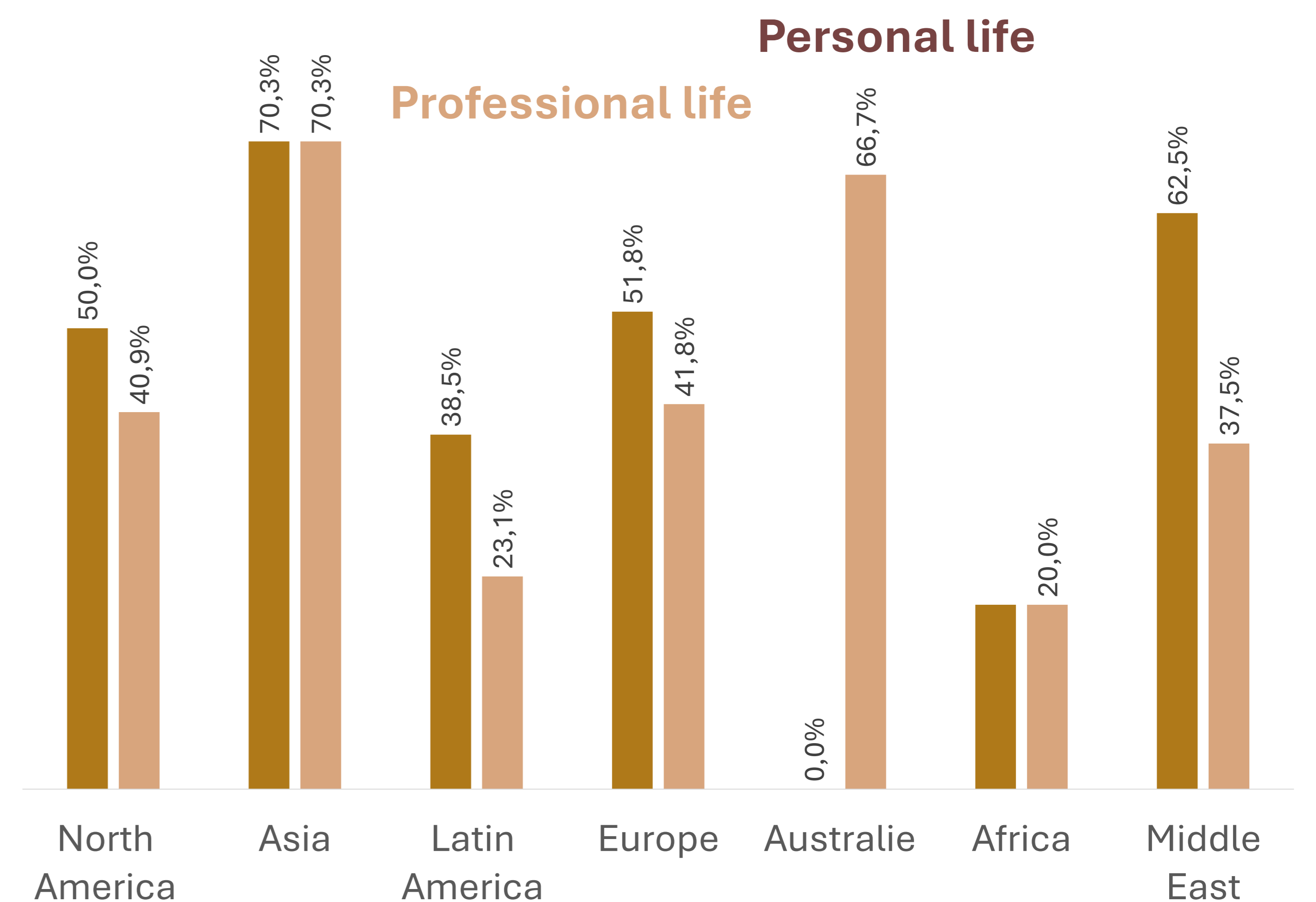


RESULTS

To avoid any potential bias, we identified patients who did not report any skin disease [SD] other than Vitiligo. Almost one in 2 vitiligo patients (45.8%) say they feel tired because of their SD (36.1% in Europe); this can be explained by the fact that 44.1% of vitiligo patients say they have trouble sleeping (43.4% in Europe). In addition, 42.5% of patients say they have had to be more careful with their spending, compared to 34.9% in Europe. Social rejection and feelings of disgust: 29.6% of patients feel shunned or rejected by others because of their SD (24.1% in Europe). More than one in 3 (34.6%) even admit to feeling looked at with disgust (26.5% in Europe).

Nearly one in three (29.1%) consistently say they feel shunned by certain people (21.7% in Europe).

This feeling of exclusion is reflected in the fact that one in two patients (50.1%) have given up attending a family or work event because of their SD (44.6% in Europe). In terms of relationship difficulties, more than one in three patients (36.9%) experience difficulties in their relationship with their partner (27.7% in Europe). At the same time, 34.6% of patients believe that their sex life has been affected by their SD (28.9% in Europe). Finally, 44.1% of vitiligo patients have felt discouraged (37.3% in Europe)



DISCUSSION

The findings, consistent worldwide, emphasize the need for global awareness and collaborative efforts to enhance diagnosis, treatment, and particularly, psychosocial support for patients.

The stigma and isolation endured by patients underscore the necessity for tailored interventions to bolster psychosocial assistance. Moreover, the impact on professional and personal relationships necessitates a comprehensive approach integrating medical care and psychological support to combat stigma and enhance the social inclusion of individuals with vitiligo.

These findings affirm the importance of managing vitiligo beyond medical realms, advocating for an integrative approach that considers all facets of patients' lives. It's crucial to advocate for educational and supportive initiatives addressing the associated stigma and enhancing patients' social and psychological resilience for improved coping with vitiligo.