

Engagement of acne-related social media influencers and bloggers for patients with acne under treatment

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RATIONAL

Social networks have emerged as pivotal platforms for dermatological and therapeutic guidance. The influence of social media personalities is increasingly prominent in disseminating health-related information and shaping health-related behaviors. It is particularly pertinent to examine the impact of interactions with these influencers during periods when individuals are more susceptible to influence. Currently, there is limited data on the importance of engaging with influencers specializing in acne content for patients undergoing acne treatment.

OBJECTIVES

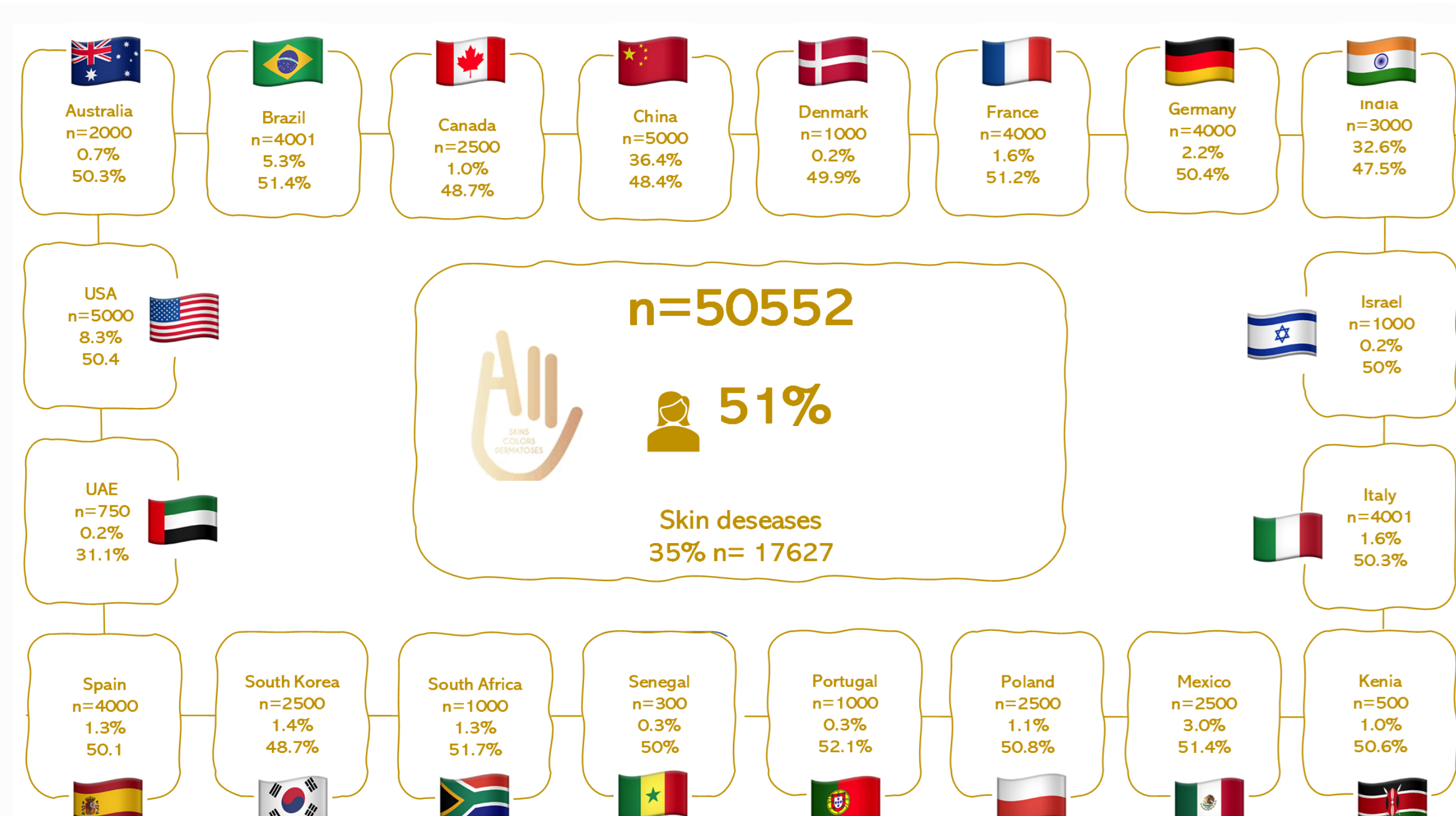
This study aims to assess the frequency of engagement with Acne-Related Social Media Influencers (ASMI) among acne patients, analyze the effects of ASMI on concern levels and adherence to treatment, and evaluate satisfaction with dermatological care.

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.

Patients with acne were selected through an online survey of the general population over the age of 18 in 20 countries worldwide. As the study used anonymous data and did not involve clinical examination, institutional review board approval was not required. Acne was self-reported by patients on the basis of a doctor's diagnosis. The questionnaire was developed in partnership with patient organizations (France3A) and continues to focus on the patient's experience. The questionnaire collected information on the patient's demographic and socio-demographic profile. A comparison was made between those who did and did not use the Internet to obtain information or discuss their condition with ASMI to assess predictors of engagement with Acne-Related Social Media Influencers such as socio-demographic and clinical characteristics, type of treatment, fear of side effects, feelings of discouragement to continue treatment and satisfaction with the treating physician. Qualitative variables are expressed as frequencies and percentages. Bivariate analyses involving categorical or qualitative variables were performed using the chi-squared statistic. bivariate analyses involving categorical or qualitative variables were performed using the chi-squared statistic.



RESULTS

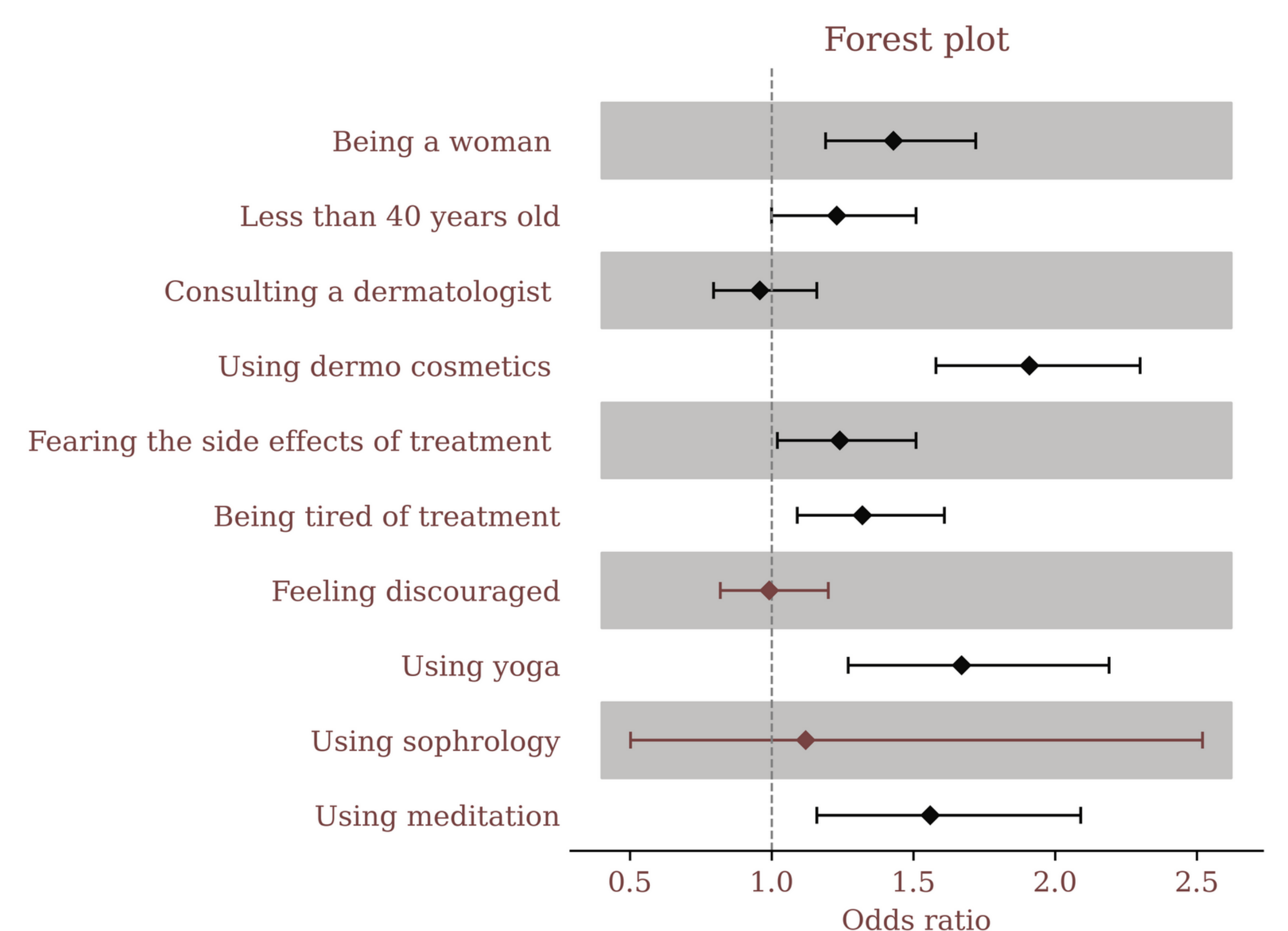
A population of 4421 patients with acne was selected, including 1858 (42.0%) men and 2563 (58.0%) women (mean age 33.6±13.2. min 16-85 years). 1131(25.8%) had consulted a dermatologist in the previous 12 months. 73 (1.6%) were receiving injectable medications, 1068 (24.2%) were receiving oral medications and 1130 (25.5%) were receiving exclusively topical medications administered by a healthcare professional. 687 (15.5%) of the 4421 respondents were ASMI users: 199 (29.0%) with oral medication and 166 exclusively (24.2%) with topical medication.

ASMI users were younger (32,29 (± 12,5) vs 33,84 (± 13,34), p ≤ 0.05). There was a female predominance (17.9% vs 12.1%, p ≤ 0.05). Prevalence of ASMI users was more important among those with oral treatment (29.0% vs 23.3%, p ≤ 0.05) but not with exclusively local treatment (24.2% vs 25.8%, p= NS).

Acne-Related Social Media Influencers users were more likely to experience treatment fatigue (53.7% vs 42.0%, p ≤ 0.05). ASMI users were more likely to report concerns about adverse effects (54.1% vs 43.5%, p ≤ 0.05),

ASMI users were no less likely to think that the time spent by the health professional was insufficient (20.4% vs 18.6%, p= NS), that the explanations given were unsatisfactory (22.3% vs 20.1%, p= NS) and that the treatment proposed was not satisfactory (24.3% vs 21.9%, p= NS).

In multivariate analysis, being young (less than 40 years old) (OR=1.23, [1.0 ; 1.51], p= 0.04), fearing the side effects of treatment or being tired of them (OR=1.32, [1.09 ; 1.61], p= 0.004), using dermo cosmetics (OR=1.91, [1.58 ; 2.3], p <0.0001), being a woman (OR=1.43, [1.19 ; 1.72], p= 0.0001), using meditation (OR=1.56, [1.16 ; 2.09], p= 0.003), or yoga (OR=1.67, [1.27 ; 2.19], p= 0.0002), were associated with "Acne-Related Social Media Influencers"



DISCUSSION

This study is the first to explore engagement with ASMI among acne patients. Our findings indicate a higher prevalence of ASMI users among individuals utilizing oral medication for acne treatment. However, no correlation was observed between interaction with acne-related social media 'influencers' and 'bloggers' and satisfaction levels with healthcare professionals. It's important to recognize that influencers possess a unique capacity to affect the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors of their followers, both consciously and unconsciously. Given the considerable physical, emotional, psychological, and social hurdles, including feelings of isolation, encountered by acne patients, they are particularly susceptible to the potential influence of social media influencers. Further research is imperative to thoroughly comprehend the substantial impact of acne patients' engagement with social media influencers.