

Chronic Dermatologic Conditions and Their Association With Perceived Academic Impairment Among Medical Students

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Purpose

- Studies have shown that chronic stress can trigger or worsen skin symptoms, especially in inflammatory or autoimmune conditions.
- Even more so, studies have shown a clear association between this psychological stress that stems from skin conditions in medical students specifically.
- However, the impact of this cycle on medical students’ academic history has not been adequately explored.
- In this study, we will evaluate the association between chronic dermatologic condition burden and perceived academic impairment among medical students.

Methods

Study Design & Participants

Cross-sectional Qualtrics survey of medical students across all years with a current or recurrent dermatologic condition lasting ≥3 months. Students without a recent/current skin condition are excluded. Participants are recruited through class GroupMes and email listservs, with electronic informed consent obtained before participation.

Measures

The survey assesses condition type, duration, professional diagnosis, visibility, and treatment. Dermatology-related quality of life is measured using the validated **Skindex-16**. Academic impairment is assessed through self-reported effects on:

- Concentration and study efficiency
- Attendance and participation
- Completion of academic requirements
- Overall perceived academic performance

Statistical Analysis

The target sample is **50 medical students** with chronic dermatologic conditions. Descriptive statistics summarize participant characteristics and outcomes. **T-tests** compare mean academic impairment scores between groups, with statistical significance defined as **p < .05**.

Survey Measures

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THESE QUESTIONS CONCERN THE SKIN CONDITION WHICH HAS BOTHERED YOU THE MOST DURING THE PAST WEEK

During the past week, how often have you been bothered by:	Never Bothered						Always Bothered
	↓						↓
1. Your skin condition itching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Your skin condition burning or stinging	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Your skin condition hurting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Your skin condition being irritated	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The persistence / reoccurrence of your skin condition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Worry about your skin condition (For example: that it will spread, get worse, scar, be unpredictable, etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. The appearance of your skin condition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Frustration about your skin condition.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Embarrassment about your skin condition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Being annoyed about your skin condition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Feeling depressed about your skin condition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. The effects of your skin condition on your interactions with others (For example: interactions with family, friends, close relationships, etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. The effects of your skin condition on your desire to be with people	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Your skin condition making it hard to show affection	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. The effects of your skin condition on your daily activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Your skin condition making it hard to work or do what you enjoy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Have you answered every item? Yes ☐ No ☐

Section 5 — Perceived Academic Impairment

During the past week, to what extent has your dermatologic condition negatively affected each of the following aspects of your medical education?

For each item:

- 0 = Not at all
- 1 = A little
- 2 = Moderately
- 3 = Quite a bit
- 4 = Extremely

- 8a. My ability to concentrate while studying or participating in academic activities.
- 8b. My study efficiency or productivity.
- 8c. My attendance or participation in classes or other required academic activities.
- 8d. My participation in clinical activities or patient interactions.
- 8e. My ability to complete academic responsibilities.
- 8f. My overall perceived academic performance.

9. During medical school, have you ever avoided or missed an academic or clinical activity specifically because of your dermatologic condition?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

Anticipated Impact

The main problem being addressed by this research is perceived academic impairment among medical students with chronic dermatologic conditions. Results of this study may raise awareness among students and medical schools about this topic. In addition, this study may provide evidence for medical schools to provide mental health support resources tailored to students with chronic skin conditions.

Referenced Literature

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