COMMENTARIES

Skin Diseases in the Emergency Department: Impact on Patient Quality of Life

La enfermedad dermatológica en urgencias y su importante impacto sobre la calidad de vida de los pacientes

The impact of skin disease on patients’ daily life tends to be underestimated, in part because most skin complaints are not immediately life-threatening. However, an increasing number of studies highlight the impact of skin disease on the psychosocial well-being of patients and the people who live with them.

Skin complaints very often involve the appearance of severe lesions and acute symptoms that generate concern for patients and their families, thus leading them to visit the emergency department. Therefore, it should be no surprise that visits for skin complaints account for a significant percentage (5%-10%) of all visits to the emergency department.

The novel study by Alegre-Sánchez et al. shows how patients who attend the emergency department with skin complaints have considerably impaired quality of life, as measured using the Dermatology Life Quality Index and the Short Form 12 health survey (version 2). These findings reinforce the important work of the dermatologist in the emergency department, since dermatologists are the specialists best prepared to diagnose, inform, and treat patients with skin complaints. Furthermore, and while not a key objective of the study, the results underline the relevance and usefulness of dermatology questionnaires as a cost-effective method for obtaining relevant patient information that would have otherwise been overlooked.

References


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