

Transcript Details

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Perspectives on Psoriasis: A Look at Its Impacts on Patients

Announcer

Welcome to ReachMD. This medical industry feature, titled "Perspectives on Psoriasis: A Look at Its Impacts on Patients" is sponsored by Dermavant. Here's your host, Dr. Linda Stein Gold.

Dr Stein Gold

Hello and welcome back. Welcome to Episode 3, "Patient Perspectives on the Impact of Psoriasis." I'm Dr Linda Stein Gold, the Director of Dermatology Clinical Research at Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, Michigan. And I'm thrilled to be joined by Keri Holyoak, MPH and PA, and she is with the Dermatology Center of Salt Lake in Utah.

Keri, thanks so much for joining me.

Keri Holyoak, PA-C, MPH

Thank you for having me.

Dr Stein Gold

Well, Keri, I know you spend a lot of time discussing the interface of the skin, the body, and the mind, especially in psoriasis. Tell us a little bit about your thoughts on this.

Keri Holyoak, PA-C, MPH

Yes. Well, first I'll say psoriasis carries with it a capricious burden. I can't look at a psoriasis patient and say, "Five days from now I know you have an important event, I know you're getting married, you're having a baby, graduating from college, I cannot tell you what your psoriasis will be doing for you."

So, you know, the psychosocial problems are very real obstacles that come with psoriasis. And we live in a time and a culture that tells us our self-worth is dependent upon what our selfie looks like on our Instagram feed, right? These narrow definitions of beauty really evoke feelings of shame and embarrassment that are worsened by the public misconceptions and stigma that still exists with psoriasis.

Dr Stein Gold

Yeah, that's so important because these patients are judged every single day, whether it's on the internet, as you mentioned, or in regular day-to-day life.

I remember I was just starting out practice and my next-door neighbor came over to introduce himself; and I had my young daughter with me at the moment. And he stuck out his hand, and he had psoriasis, and my daughter jumped back. And she just didn't know, she had never seen it before. I, myself, was humiliated. I can imagine how humiliated he was.

So often we walk into a patient room, we see their disease, but we don't see them.

Keri Holyoak, PA-C, MPH

I think in my clinical experience, depression and psoriasis doesn't always present in an obvious way. It can be very subclinical, it can be insidious, it can be an overall "blah" that starts to own more of their time and their happiness. Things that used to give them more joy just doesn't anymore. And many of my patients will say, "I'm just overwhelmed, or my body aches, or my skin itches, it tingles, it crawls." Or they just say they're tired, you know, because, oh, they're just getting older.

You know, those are those cues, and these are significant mental health challenges that we need to notice, and we need to address.

Dr Stein Gold

Our patients have to deal with their disease basically being the front and center every single day. How do you start that conversation about how it impacts them?

Keri Holyoak, PA-C, MPH

Well, first of all, I'll have discussions with my patients about the relationship between psoriasis and mental health. (Hsu M-A. J Psor Psoriatic Arthrit. 2017) I'll tell them their mental health is as important to me as their physical health. And just like we need a physical gym for our bodies, we need a mental gym for our minds. You know, we don't wait for a heart attack to start exercising and eating well. We don't wait for a mental breakdown before we start a mental maintenance program. So we need a regular practice of emotional health, because I know, you know, in the right mental state, we can process our thoughts and we can achieve goals in our life.

Dr Stein Gold

That's a healthy attitude. That's great.

Thank you so much, Keri. This is, just really emphasizes the importance of treating not only the skin but, also, the patient as a whole. And that includes really treating the patient's mental health and asking about it.

Keri Holyoak, PA-C, MPH

Thanks for having me, Dr. Stein Gold, to talk about this important topic.

Dr Stein Gold

I'd like to thank everybody for joining us for this Episode 3, "Patient Perspectives on the Impact of Psoriasis." Please make sure you join in for Episode 1, which were "The Burden of Psoriasis," and Episode 2, which talks about "The Aryl Hydrocarbon Receptor Signaling in Psoriasis."

Announcer

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