INTRODUCTION

• Acne is a common chronic disease fraught with public misconceptions about causes and treatments.

Understanding the patient’s experiences and expectations may help highlight shortcomings; however, there is a paucity of such information from these with acne.

OBJECTIVE

• The objective was to investigate attitudes of the general public and self-perceptions and experiences of people with acne to understand the barriers and expectations for management of the condition.

PROCEDURE/STUDY

• Two online surveys were administered between July 1 and July 12, 2019 by email invitation to nationally representative respondents from the USA.

• One survey was among the general population (GenPop) ≥ 14-years-old (N=2000).

• The other was for those with acne/acne scars (AcnePop) aged 14-26 years old (N=1000) who stated they currently had one of the following:

- Severe acne (defined as “up to many noninflammatory lesions, may have some inflammatory lesions, but no more than one small deep pimple”)
- Moderate acne (defined as “up to many noninflammatory lesions, may have some inflammatory lesions, but no more than a few deep pimples”)
- Moderate acne scarring (defined as “scars have medium depth or intensity”)
- Severe acne (defined as “up to many noninflammatory and inflammatory lesions, but no more than a few deep pimples”)
- Moderate acne scarring (defined as “scars have medium depth or intensity”)

Table 1. Demographics and acne data of the acne respondents (AcnePop) and general population respondents (GenPop)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>AcnePop (N = 1000)</th>
<th>GenPop (N = 2000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female 649 (65%)</td>
<td>Male 1051 (53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age, years</td>
<td>18-19 428 (43%)</td>
<td>18-19 944 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-29 517 (51%)</td>
<td>20-29 956 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-39 221 (22%)</td>
<td>30-39 504 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-49 333 (33%)</td>
<td>40-49 448 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50+ 496 (49%)</td>
<td>50+ 682 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>White 711 (71%)</td>
<td>White 1390 (69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other 289 (29%)</td>
<td>Other 610 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acne</td>
<td>None 785 (78%)</td>
<td>None 1449 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate to severe/severe 297 (30%)</td>
<td>Moderate to severe/severe 406 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mild/mild to moderate 118 (12%)</td>
<td>Mild/mild to moderate 151 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acne scarring</td>
<td>None 785 (78%)</td>
<td>None 1449 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate 242 (12%)</td>
<td>Moderate 277 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Severe 100 (10%)</td>
<td>Severe 123 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current acne/scarring</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current acne solicited</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous acne/acne scarring</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous acne solicited</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two equal groups of 1000 respondents were shown either a set of images with or a set without acne. Percentages are shown for those who responded to 1 to 3 points on a 7-point scale, e.g., from 1-extremely healthy to 4-neither attractive or unattractive (7 ambivalence).

Figure 1. General Perception of Acne/acne Scarring (GenPop N = 2000)

Figure 2. Burden of acne/acne scarring on non-acne respondents (AcnePop N = 1000)

Figure 3. Percentage of Acne Respondents Who Had Sought Professional Help (a; AcnePop, N = 1000) and the Healthcare Professional Consulted (b; n = 742)

Survey Populations

• Demographics and acne data of the acne respondents (AcnePop) and general population respondents (GenPop)

General Perceptions About Acne

• When GenPop were shown images of people with acne, acne scarring, they were perceived as less healthy, less attractive, less successful, and less approachable than images without acne (Figure 1)

• Furthermore, 26% of GenPop indicated they believed that people with acne have poorer hygiene

Burden of Acne

• Around half of AcnePop (46%) indicated they were more likely to take sick leave for acne than for a cold

• About two-thirds of AcnePop (61%) felt they were less productive at work or school during a flare-up (Figure 2)

Professional Help Received by Acne patients

• The vast majority of AcnePop (92%) reported having received unsolicited advice and 39% of GenPop admitted they have given people with acne unsolicited advice at least once

• Of GenPop (N = 791) who had given unsolicited advice to people with acne, the most common suggestion was to see a doctor (47%)

• Overall, 26% of AcnePop had never consulted a healthcare professional and 36% never received prescription for acne/acne scarring (Figure 2a)

• Of those who have seen a medical professional for their acne/acne scarring

- 72% had consulted a dermatologist
- 45% a primary care physician
- 25% a therapist/psychiatrist (Figure 3b)

Information Gaps

• The vast majority (99%) were dissatisfied with information they received from the healthcare providers.

• The main topics they desired more information on were:

- acne triggers (44%)
- how different skin types are affected by acne (44%)
- what treatments are available (45%)
- how severe acne is determined and treatment options
- acne triggers (44%)
- acne management (45%)
- non-drug treatment options (44%)
- acne products (44%)
- how severe acne is determined and treatment options

Almost two-thirds of AcnePop (61%) felt they were less productive at work or school during a flare-up than a cold

REFERENCES