

Impact of hirsutism on the Quality of life of patients presenting to the dermatology department of public hospital Islamabad

Sajida Bibi¹, Muneeza Rizwan¹, Ismat Jabin², Saad Zia Khan³, Samra Iram², Afnan Bin Haq⁴

¹ Department of Dermatology, PAF Hospital/ Fazaia Medical College, Islamabad.

² Department of Dermatology, Combined Military Hospital, Pano Aqil.

³ Department of Dermatology, PAC Hospital, Kamra.

⁴ Department of Dermatology, Combined Military Hospital, Gujranwala.

Abstract

Background Hirsutism, characterized by excessive male-pattern hair growth in women, can significantly impact self-image and Quality of Life (QoL). Women suffering from hirsutism often face challenges related to self-esteem and dissatisfaction with their appearance, potentially impacting their overall quality of life.

Objective This study aimed to determine the mean Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI) score in females with hirsutism.

Methods A cross-sectional study was conducted at the Dermatology Department of Public Hospital Islamabad from March 10, 2021, to September 10, 2021. A total of 130 women with hirsutism completed the DLQI questionnaire. Data on DLQI scores and demographic information were collected and analyzed.

Results The mean age of participants was 27.92±3.87 years, with a mean duration of hirsutism of 16.22±6.21 months. The mean DLQI score was 18.10±4.73. The severity of hirsutism was classified as mild in 6.2%, moderate in 80.8%, and severe in 13.1% of patients.

Conclusion Hirsutism has a significant negative impact on patients' QoL, affecting their personality, daily activities, and interpersonal relationships. The impairment in QoL is evident across various severities of hirsutism and is more pronounced in those with a longer duration of the condition.

Keywords

Hirsutism; Quality of Life; Dermatology Life Quality Index; Health impact.

Introduction

Hirsutism is a condition characterized by excessive hair growth in women in areas where males typically grow hair. This condition can significantly impact a woman's self-esteem and

quality of life, affecting various aspects of her social and emotional well-being.^{1,2} The prevalence of hirsutism varies across different populations, with estimates ranging from 5% to 15% among women.³ Despite its common occurrence, the psychological and social consequences of hirsutism are often underappreciated in clinical settings.

The condition is frequently associated with underlying hormonal imbalances or disorders such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), which is the most common cause of hirsutism.^{4,5}

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Address for correspondence

Dr. Sajida Bibi, Consultant Dermatologist,
Department of Dermatology, PAF Hospital
Islamabad/ Fazaia Medical College Air University,
Pakistan.

Email: dr.sj97@gmail.com

Other contributing factors may include adrenal disorders, certain medications, and genetic predisposition.⁶ Understanding these factors is crucial for providing comprehensive care and effective treatment for affected individuals.

Treatment options for hirsutism vary and include both pharmacological and non-pharmacological approaches. Common treatments involve hormonal therapies such as oral contraceptives and anti-androgens, as well as physical methods like laser hair removal and electrolysis.^{7,8} Treatment options for hirsutism are typically determined by the severity of symptoms, the underlying factors contributing to the condition, and the individual preferences of the patient.

The impact of hirsutism extends beyond physical symptoms, affecting mental health and social interactions. Many women with hirsutism experience anxiety, depression, and reduced quality of life due to the condition.⁹ This highlights the need for a holistic approach in managing hirsutism, addressing both the physical and psychological aspects to improve overall patient outcomes.

The objective of this research is to evaluate how hirsutism influences the quality of life of patients seeking care at the Dermatology Department of Public Hospital Islamabad. By evaluating the relationship between hirsutism and quality of life, we seek to enhance our understanding of the condition and improve management strategies for affected individuals.

Methods

A cross-sectional study was carried out at the Dermatology Department of Public Hospital Islamabad between March 10, 2021, and September 10, 2021. We included 130 women with hirsutism, defined as excessive terminal hair growth in male-pattern areas with a DLQI score of 8 or higher.¹⁰ Patients with other facial

dermatoses, systemic illnesses, or pre-existing depressive disorders were excluded.

Participants completed the DLQI questionnaire, which measures QoL across six domains: symptoms and feelings, daily activities, leisure activities, work and schooling, personal relationships, and treatment.¹¹

Each participant's responses were rated on a scale from 0 (no impact) to 3 (significant impact), with higher scores indicating a lower quality of life. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 22, with mean±SD for quantitative variables and frequency for qualitative variables. Statistical analysis using ANOVA was employed to assess the significance of any observed differences.

Results

The demographic and clinical profiles of the participants are summarized in **Table 1**. The mean age was 27.92±3.87 years, with a mean hirsutism duration of 16.22±6.21 months and a mean weight of 66.58±6.03 kg. The mean DLQI score was 18.10±4.73.

Severity of hirsutism was categorized as mild (6.2%), moderate (80.8%), and severe (13.1%) (**Table 2**).

Table 1 Demographic data (n=130).

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Mean±SD</i>
Age (years)	27.923±3.87
Duration of hirsutism (months)	16.223±6.21
Weight (Kg)	66.584±6.03
Dermatology life quality Index score	18.100±4.73

Table 2 Frequency according to severity of hirsutism. (n=130)

<i>Severity of hirsutism</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%age</i>
Mild	8	6.2
Moderate	105	80.8
Severe	17	13.1
Total	130	100

Table 3 Stratification of Dermatology Life Quality Index Score with respect to age.

Age (years)	Dermatology life quality Index score	F	P value
15-30	18.25± 5.13	3.409	0.067
>30	16.74 ± 2.78		

Table 3 shows that the DLQI score was slightly higher in the younger age group (15-30 years) compared to those older than 30 years.

Discussion

Hirsutism affects QoL significantly, with a mean DLQI score of 18.10±4.73 in our study, which is higher than findings from other studies.^{12 13} The impact on QoL is comparable across different severities of hirsutism, with a notable decline in QoL observed with longer disease duration.¹⁴ Our findings are consistent with Sotudeh *et al.* (2003) regarding the association between obesity and higher DLQI scores.¹⁵ Moreover, marital status did not significantly influence DLQI scores in our study, aligning with the findings of Drosdzol *et al.*¹⁶

Conclusion

Hirsutism markedly affects the QoL of affected women, impacting their personality, daily activities, and relationships. The condition has a profound effect regardless of severity and is exacerbated by a longer disease duration. Addressing hirsutism through proper counseling, medical treatment, and cosmetic interventions can help improve QoL outcomes for these patients.

Ethical approval LM NO FPGMI/100372/3/Org 12.

Declaration of patient consent The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent.

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Conflict of interest Authors declared no conflict of interest.

Authors' contribution

SB: Substantial contribution to study design, acquisition of data, manuscript writing, has given final approval of the version to be published.

MR: Substantial contribution to study design, critical review of the manuscript, has given final approval of the version to be published.

IJ: Substantial contribution to data collection and data analysis, manuscript writing.

SZ,SI: Substantial contribution to data collection and data analysis, critical review of the manuscript.

ABH: Critical review of the manuscript.

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