

Quality of life in alopecia areata: A disease-specific questionnaire

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Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology

Volume 27, Issue 3, March 2013, Pages e276-e281

Abstract

Background Alopecia areata (AA) is an autoimmune disease affecting about 2% of the population, which has a considerable impact on quality of life (QoL). There are no disease-specific questionnaires to assess QoL in patients suffering from AA. **Objective** To validate a new disease-specific questionnaire for AA, named AA-QLI, and to compare the consequent Quality of Life Index (QLI) with the commonly known Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI) to verify if it can provide a more comprehensive tool for patients. **Methods** A total of 50 patients affected by AA were administered both the AA-QLI, created by us, and the well-known DLQI. With the aim to detect suitable QLI, we propose to use two multivariate analyses: a principal component analysis approach on the data collected with both questionnaires to compare their capability to measure the QoL; a structural equation modelling on our AA-QLI to identify which category of symptoms mostly affects the QoL. **Results** The scores of both the questionnaires are quite close, except for a few cases. Statistical analysis shows a higher specificity of the AA-QLI for evaluating QoL. Among the three areas in which AA-QLI is divided, 'Relationship' has a major impact on the QLI, followed by 'Subjective symptoms'; 'Objective signs' has a lower weight on the QLI. **Conclusion** AA-QLI is a good instrument to evaluate the real impact of AA on QoL. It can be helpful both for the physician and for the patient. © 2012 European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology.