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

Fabbrocini G.a, Panariello L.a, De Vita V.a, Vincenzi C.b, Lauro C.c, Nappo D.c, Ayala F.a, Tosti A.b

a Department of Systematic Pathology, Section of Clinical, Allergological and Venereological Dermatology, University of Naples Federico II, Italy

b Department of Specialistic and Experimental Clinical Medicine, Division of Dermatology, University of Bologna, Italy

c Department of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Naples Federico II, Italy

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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.