

Mental Health and Well-Being Support for Individuals Living With Skin Conditions: A Global Landscape Analysis of Patient Needs and Current Resources

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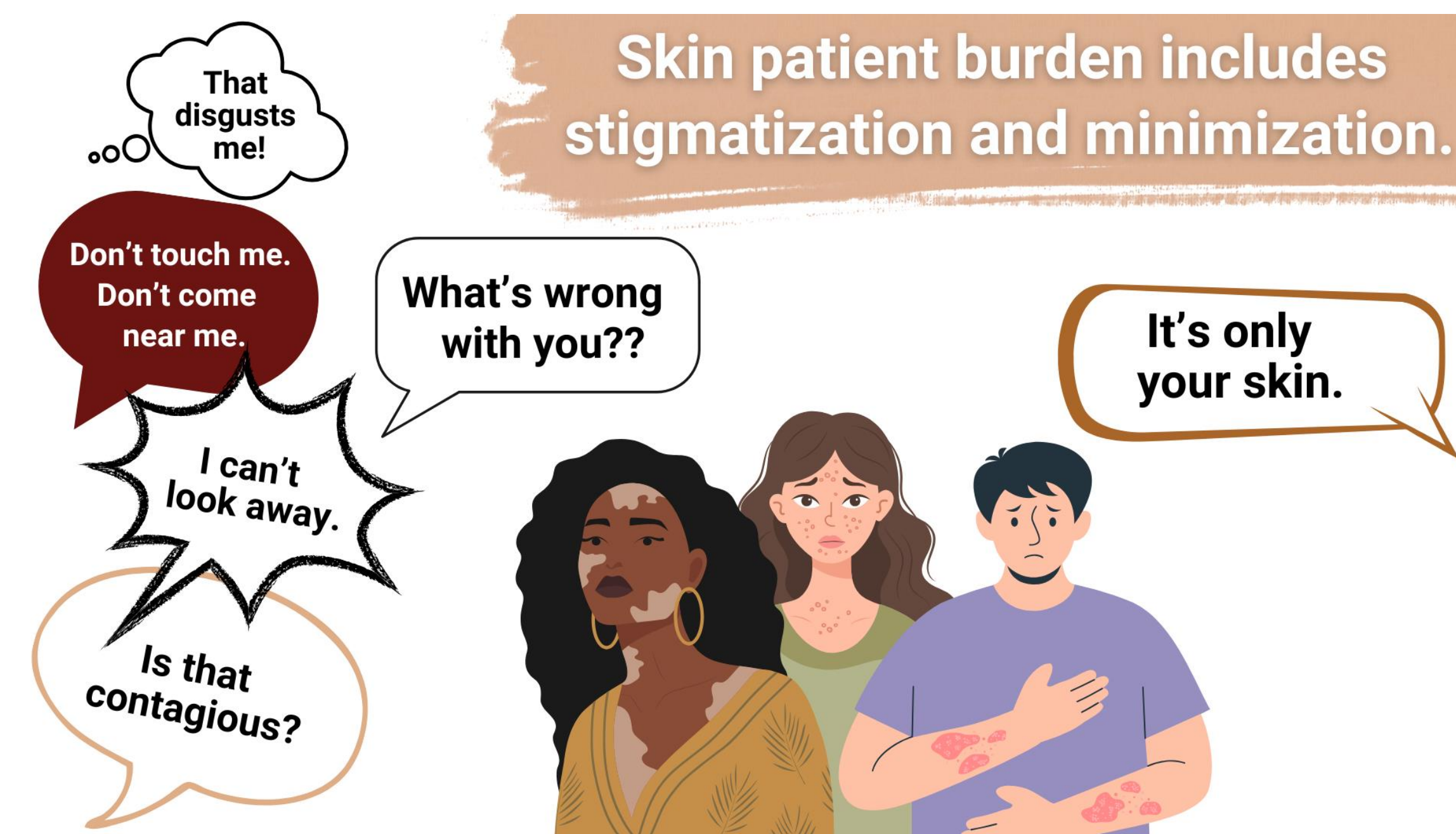
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Background & Objectives

The consequences on mental health and well-being for skin disease patients are often detrimental, impacting the ability to conduct routine daily activities and engage socially. Given the prevalence of dermatological conditions, it is critical that resources are available to address these needs.

This study aimed to identify what types of resources exist to support mental health and well-being for individuals with skin conditions, and understand optimal, globally inclusive ways to provide this support.



Materials and Methods

- Academic literature review for articles published within the last 10 years using combinations of relevant medical subject headings/keywords such as dermatology, psychodermatology, mental health, psychological health, skin, depression, etc.
- Grey literature review/environmental scan for websites, reports, documents and presentations regarding the topic
- Connecting with groups and organizations that have contributed to mental health resources

Results

We identified 26 patient advocacy websites featuring mental health and well-being resources. We reviewed the methods of support delivery considering sensitivity to mental health-related stigma and cultural beliefs and lifestyles across six world regions. Many resources originated in the UK where several different groups and organizations have studied the impact of skin conditions on mental health and well-being and advocated for improved supports.

Regional Insights

Africa

- Community-based mental health interventions like **group interpersonal psychotherapy**
- **Integrating local leaders and gender-sensitive approaches**

Americas

- **Community-focused, culturally tailored interventions**, such as programs delivered by **trained laypersons**
- Efforts to **increase accessibility and customize** services for diverse populations

Eastern Mediterranean

- The WHO's digital intervention, Step-by-Step, has shown success in reducing depression among displaced populations
- **Local, culturally sensitive initiatives and online** programs offer viable solutions

Europe

- Given the region's cultural diversity, **online mental health interventions and more accessible care**

South-East Asia

- Low-cost interventions, such as **peer support and teletherapy**, are promising solutions, especially with the involvement of **trained laypersons**.
- **Digital health technologies** offer opportunities for scalable mental health care

Western Pacific

- **Digital platforms**, supported by the high smartphone penetration, offer a potential solution for delivering mental health care, though challenges like limited internet access in rural areas and digital literacy gaps need to be overcome.
- **Community-based tools** may also help reach underserved populations.

Conclusion

This study can help us improve care for the mental health and well-being of those with skin conditions. Recommendations for the future include:

- **Resource Evaluation:** Assess the effectiveness of existing resources.
- **Adaptation for Local Needs:** Ensure resources align with regional cultural beliefs and societal norms.
- **Expansion:** Expand resources to underserved regions and tailor them for global applicability.