



**VDS**

**Visible Diseases  
of the Skin**

a Patient Centric survey  
by Pierre Fabre

"CHANGING THE WAY WE LOOK  
AT VISIBLE DERMATOSES"



**Pierre Fabre**

# "CHANGING THE WAY WE LOOK AT VISIBLE DERMATOSES"

The Pierre Fabre group presents the first international epidemiological study on the prevalence and psychosocial impact of visible chronic dermatoses conducted on over 13,000 people

*Dermatoses such as eczema, hand eczema, acne, psoriasis, ichthyosis, vitiligo, and rosacea do not impair vital functions, but can significantly affect quality of life.*

**Castres, November 30th, 2021.** The Pierre Fabre Group's Patient Centricity Division will present the first international study on the prevalence and psychosocial impact of visible skin diseases under the name "**Visible Diseases of the Skin (VDS)**". The aim of the study was to explore the consequences of skin diseases involving the face and hands, i.e. socially visible areas.

The study involved 13,138 adult participants in six countries<sup>1</sup> (Canada, China, Italy, Spain, Germany, and France). All participants were invited to complete a digital questionnaire that was created alongside the relevant patient organizations. The subjects who confirmed having one or more dermatoses were asked to specify their respective locations (hands, face, or body) and the different impacts observed on their daily lives.

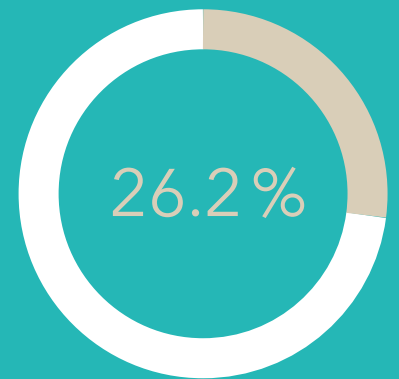
## Chronic skin diseases affect patients' quality of life.

For the first time, this study reports the prevalence of visible or apparent dermatoses in a large sample of over 13,000 people. **Three in four** patients with a skin disease reported facial and/or hand involvement. **One in ten** complained of both hand and facial involvement. It is important to consider these data when looking at quality of life or the burden of chronic skin diseases

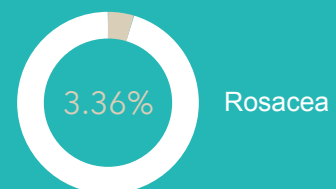
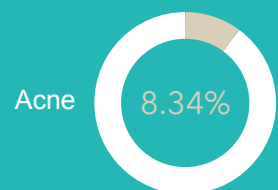
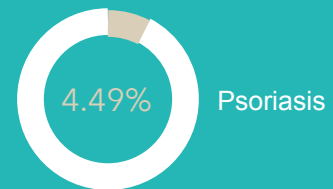
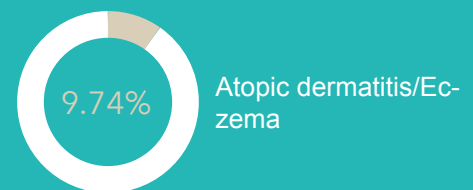
The patients' average age was **around 37 years**, which is significantly younger than that of patients with no signs of skin disease (45 years).

In total, **75.3%** of patients with one of these dermatoses reported that their skin disease was localized on the hands and/or face.

Out of 13,138 online respondents, 3,072 participants



reportedly suffer from skin diseases



<sup>1</sup> - 2,011 Canadians, 3,050 Chinese, 2,000 French, 2,000 Italians, 2,040 Spaniards, and 2,037 Germans participated in this study.

## Localized dermatoses on a visible area: a daily burden

Skin diseases, regardless of their etiological differences and specific development, have one thing in common: they can often be seen by others. Most dermatoses are concentrated on the hands and face. This international study is the first to assess the consequences and impact of visible dermatoses (hands and face) in the context of real, everyday life. It shows that, whatever the country, this localization is very frequent.

Among patients with a skin disease, **39.9%** and **25.8%** reported facial and hand involvement, respectively. In total, **9.7%** reported simultaneous involvement of the hands and face, while **24.6%** reported involvement of the body only, without involvement of the hands or face. On the hands, the most common location was the back of the hand (**55%**), followed by the fingers (**43.5%**), and palms (**32.5%**), and **11.7%** reported nail involvement.

Therefore, for **dermatoses on the hands**:

- **25.8%** of patients who reported localized dermatosis on the hands considered it an occupational disability,
- **26%** reported having difficulties using a smartphone or computer keyboard,
- **32%** admitted to being limited in carrying out their everyday tasks,
- **28%** said they thought their lives would have been different without skin lesions on their hands, and **34%** said they had already tried to hide those lesions.

“

*This study is the first to assess the prevalence and consequences of localized skin diseases on visible areas of the body. Three in four patients with a skin disease reported facial and/or hand involvement. One in ten complained of both hand and facial involvement. These data must be taken into account when considering quality of life or the burden of chronic skin diseases”, explains Professor Bernard Cribier, Head of Dermatology at the University Hospital of Strasbourg.*

”

75%

of respondents reported having

**a visible dermatosis on the face and/or hands**

50%

of respondents stated that

**this condition resulted in difficulties at school**

## Dermatosis on the hands

26%

of respondents reported having

**difficulties using a smartphone or computer keyboard**

25%

of respondents

**considered it an occupational disability**

34%

of respondents reported

**trying to hide their dermatoses**

There was a significantly higher reported prevalence of hand involvement in men than women (**25%** vs. **21%**) and a significantly lower reported prevalence of facial involvement in men (**32%** vs. **38%**).

On the face, the most frequent location was the cheeks (**51%**), followed by the forehead (**43%**), and chin (**35.2%**). The least frequent locations were the lips (**10%**) and ears (**13.3%**), and **18.1%** reported scalp involvement.

#### For dermatoses on the face:

- **18%** of patients who reported facial involvement considered it an occupational disability,
- **26%** stated that their personal lives would have been different,
- **20%** stated that their professional lives would have been richer if their face had not been involved

“

*Fortunately, having rosacea, psoriasis, eczema, acne, ichthyosis, or vitiligo does not alter vital functions. Nevertheless, this international epidemiological study confirms that these visible dermatoses have a significant psycho-social impact on quality of life and the stigmatization of people suffering from these diseases. They are a considerable burden in everyday life, both professional and private", adds Professor Marie-Aleth Richard, dermatologist at the Timone University Hospital in Marseille.*

”

The functional and esthetic disability that the patient experiences has repercussions that go far beyond simply managing the skin disease. One in two patients reported suffering from facial involvement since childhood. Surprisingly, hand involvement has significant consequences for patients, which are not limited to the functional impairment that is usually mentioned. Dermatologists pay attention to the face, but are probably less interested in the hands, which can be just as, if not more detrimental to the patient's social life than the face. Dermatologists could better meet their patients' needs by taking the involvement of visible skin lesions into consideration.

## Dermatosis on the face

**26%**

stated that they thought

**their life would have been different**

**18%**

of patients who reported facial involvement

**considered it an occupational disability**

**20%**

said

**their professional lives would have been richer if their face had not been involved**

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**T**his study confirms the suffering of those living with chronic visible dermatoses. From their days at school through to their professional and private lives, a great deal of psychological suffering has been observed, which can be expressed by anguish or anxiety about being seen in public, sleep disorders, a feeling of worthlessness or even depression.

*“There is an urgent need to act for these patients who feel they are facing their visible dermatoses alone. This study makes us aware of the ordeal of these people who often believe that their lives would have been different if they did not have hand or facial dermatoses. Using a smart phone or computer keyboard can therefore be difficult for people with hand dermatoses”,* explains **Dr. Markéta Saint Aroman, Medical Director of Patient Centricity within the Pierre Fabre Group.**

## 1. Acne located on a visible area

According to the "Objectifs Peau" [Skin objectives] study, the **prevalence of adult acne** in France is **7%**. Acne is probably the most common dermatosis among young people and adults. While the impact of acne in adolescents has been studied extensively, that of acne in adults has been less so. It is clear that these adults need treatment tailored to their specific situation.

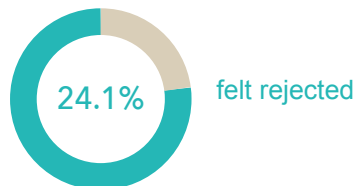
For these people, the acne was localized:

- on **the cheeks** for 63%,
- on **the forehead** for 58%,
- on the **nose** for 63%.

The study recalls the prevalence of adult acne observed in the "Objectifs Peau" study. It also shows, in a sufficiently large group of participants, that the impact of adult acne in terms of quality of life and daily burden is far from negligible. The impact on quality of life is closely linked to the experience and background of each patient. The stigmatization of patients and the feeling of rejection are both very real and undoubtedly call for vigilance on the part of health professionals, as shown by the figures opposite:

Most people reported that their facial involvement was a disability in their professional, emotional, and family lives, and their social relationships, leisure, and sporting activities, respectively.

In terms of stigmatization in people with acne:



France 3 A  
Clémence Legrand  
contact@france3a.fr  
www.france3a.fr



# 31%

stated that their **personal lives**

would have been different if their

**face had not been involved**

(21.4% for their **professional lives**)

# 53%

reported trying to **hide** their **facial involvement**

(84.1% by using **corrective make up**)

# 17%

considered that their **sex lives** were **affected**

# 19,1%

felt that the location

of their **acne** caused **difficulties** in their **social relationships**

# 29%

said they had **trouble sleeping**

# 38.1%

admitted to being **tired**

## 2. Psoriasis located on a visible area

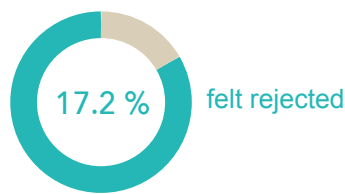
Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory disease characterized by well-defined, raised, red plaques covered with whitish scales or a thin, silvery film that can easily be removed. It is estimated that 2-3% of the world's population is affected by psoriasis.

For these people, the psoriasis was located on:

- **the hands** for 43 %;
- **the hands** (back, palm, fingers or nails) for 25 %;
- **the face** (scalp and forehead) for 25 %;
- **the hands and face** for 3%.

The study shows, in a sufficiently large group of participants, that the impact of adult psoriasis in terms of quality of life and daily burden is far from negligible (see figures opposite).

In terms of stigmatization in people with psoriasis:



France Psoriasis  
info@francepsoriasis.org  
Tel: +33 (0)1 42 39 02 55  
www.francepsoriasis.org



35 %

experienced **disruption**  
to their **personal lives**

27 %

experienced **disruption**  
to their **professional lives**

14.9 %

considered that their **sex lives**  
were **affected**

13 %

felt that **psoriasis**  
caused **difficulties**  
in their **social relationships**

13.6 %

felt that **psoriasis** caused  
**difficulties** with their **partners**

35 %

said they had  
**trouble sleeping**

40.6 %

admitted to being **tired**



### 3. Eczema located on a visible area

Atopic dermatitis, also known as atopic eczema, is a chronic inflammatory skin disease. It usually develops in infants and children but can persist and sometimes appear in adolescents and adults. While the impact of eczema in infants and children has been extensively studied, that of eczema in adults has been less so. It is clear that these adults need care that is tailored to their specific situation.

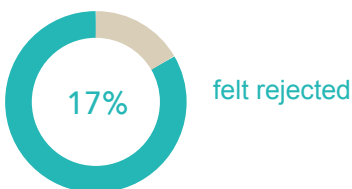
For these people, the eczema was localized on:

- **a visible area of their body** for 52%. Out of these, 54.5% reported a visible location that involved **the hands** and 38.6% the **face**;
- **the hands and face** for 6.9%.

The study shows, in a sufficiently large group of participants, that the impact of adult atopic eczema in terms of quality of life and daily burden is far from negligible. The impact on quality of life is closely linked to the experience and background of each patient. The stigmatization of patients and the feeling of rejection are both very real (see figures opposite).

The localization of eczema on a visible area leads to more frequent involvement of **patient organizations**, which tends to show the **crucial role that these entities play**.

In terms of stigmatization in people with eczema:



Association Française de l'Eczéma  
Sonia Khatchadourian - soniak@skrelationspresse.com  
Tel. +33 6 68 65 03 36  
www.associationeczema.fr



31.8%  
experienced **disruption**  
to their **personal lives**

26.1%  
experienced **disruption**  
to their **professional lives**

16.5%  
reported having **contacted**  
a **patient organization**

16.2%  
considered that their **sex lives**  
were **affected**

14.4%  
thought that the condition was causing them  
**difficulties** in their **social lives**

16.7%  
felt that **eczema**  
caused **difficulties**  
with their **partners**

32.7%  
said they had  
**trouble sleeping**

37.7%  
admitted to being **tired**

## 4. Chronic hand eczema

Chronic hand eczema (CHE) mainly affects adults, as it is often caused and/or aggravated by household or workplace products. CHE is particularly disabling in everyday life, especially in social, professional, leisure, or romantic contexts. It is often accompanied by pruritus or pain, which can severely impair quality of life.

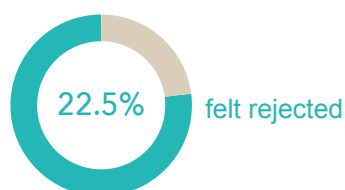
Twenty-eight percent of the respondents concerned reported suffering from **chronic hand eczema since childhood**. Out of these, nearly **one in two** (40.6%) reported having difficulties at school due to their dermatosis. These included **teasing** for 41.2% of them and **exclusion** for 30.3%.

The study shows, in a sufficiently large group of participants, that the impact of adult psoriasis in terms of quality of life and daily burden is far from negligible:

- Most of the respondents stated that their hand involvement constituted a **disability in their professional, emotional, and family lives, and their social relations, leisure, and sporting activities, respectively**.

Their disability was mainly esthetic for nearly one in two subjects, and functional for one in three subjects (see figures opposite).

In terms of stigmatization in people with CHE:



Association Française de l'Eczéma  
Sonia Khatchadourian - soniak@skrelationspresse.com  
Tel. +33 6 68 65 03 36  
www.associationeczema.fr



# 15.9%

reported having **difficulties** using a **smartphone**

# 29.8%

thought that their **personal lives** would have been **different** in the **absence of CHE** (**31.6%** for their **professional lives**)

# 26.1%

reported trying to **hide their hand involvement, (44.2%** with gloves)

# 19.4%

considered that their **sex lives** were **affected**

## 5. Rosacea localized on a visible area

Rosacea is a common condition, accounting for **2 to 3%** of dermatological consultations. It occurs most commonly in women aged 45 and over. The psychological and relational discomfort, the esthetic damage and the negative connotation of a "red" face justify the request for medical treatment of the disease.

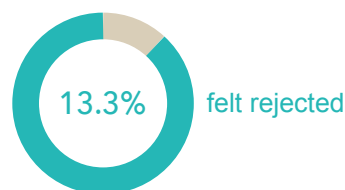
The three most frequently reported locations were:

- **the cheeks** (62%);
- **the nose** (34%);
- **the eyelids** (5%).

The study showed that in a sufficiently large group of participants, the impact of rosacea in terms of **quality of life** and **burden** on daily life is far from negligible. The impact on quality of life is closely linked to the experience and background of each patient (see figures opposite).

The majority of people said that localization on their face was a disability in their professional, emotional, and family lives, and their social relationships, leisure activities, and sporting activities.

In terms of stigmatization in people with rosacea:



19%

thought that their **personal lives** would have been **different** if their **face had not been involved**

21.7%

said their **professional lives** would have been **different** if their **face had not been involved**

37%

admitted to **having tried to hide the disease** **28%** with **the use of corrective make up** (41% of women vs 8% of men)

8%

considered that their **sex lives** were **affected**

10%

thought that the condition was causing them **difficulties** in their **social lives**

27.4%

said they had **trouble sleeping**

28.4%

admitted to **being tired**

## 6. Ichthyosis localized on a visible area

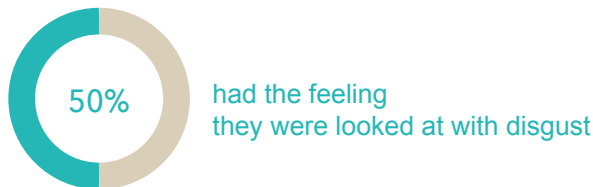
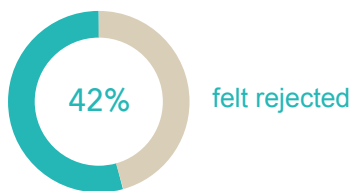
Ichthyosis is a dermatological disease. It is a permanent structural abnormality of the skin. The highly visible lesions (often on the whole body) are usually pruritic, uncomfortable and even painful (cracks, bullae). There is significant sensitivity to external conditions (discomfort in the heat). The skin may become superinfected and have an unpleasant odor.

This study confirms that, in a sufficiently large group of participants, the impact in terms of quality of life and daily burden is far from negligible (see figures opposite).

Furthermore, for most of the respondents, their ichthyosis was disruptive to their emotional lives (57%), family lives (33%), social relationships (24%), leisure activities (43%), and sporting activities (37%).

- 78% and 58% respectively stated that ichthyosis was a disability in their personal and professional lives,
- 18% reported trying to hide their condition,
- 61% reported using alternative and complementary medicine.

In terms of stigmatization in people with ichthyosis:



Association Ichtyose France  
info@ichtyose.fr  
Tel: +33 7 65 151 151  
www.ichtyose.fr



# 78%

stated that **ichthyosis was a disability** in their **professional lives**

# 43%

admitted that their **ichthyosis affected their relationships** with their **loved ones** (partner, friends or family)

# 40%

admitted to experiencing **difficulties** in their **relationship**

# 36%

expressed the feeling that their **ichthyosis affected their sex lives**

# 52%

said they had **trouble sleeping**

# 45%

admitted to being **tired**

## 7. Vitiligo

Vitiligo is an autoimmune disease and a skin condition that manifests itself as irregular, oval, well-defined white areas on the skin, sometimes with a darker border. For 75% of vitiligo patients, the so-called depigmented areas appear on the face or hands.

Therefore:

- 35% admitted to having experienced difficulties in their relationships and 37% expressed the feeling that their vitiligo affected their sex lives,
- 46% said they had trouble sleeping and 54% feel tired because of their vitiligo.

In terms of stigmatization in people with vitiligo:



Association Française du Vitiligo  
courrier@afvitiligo.com  
Tel. +33 (0)1 45 26 15 55  
www.afvitiligo.com

Association Française du  
**Vitiligo**

55%

experienced disruption to their  
**personal lives**

35%

admitted to experiencing  
**difficulties** in their **relationship**

37%

expressed the feeling that  
their **vitiligo affected**  
their **sex lives**

19%

felt that **vitiligo**  
caused **difficulties**  
in their **social relationships**

46%

said they had  
**trouble sleeping**

54%

admitted to being **tired**

**T**his study shows that people with visible dermatoses go through a great deal of psychological suffering. It is important to change the way we look at visible skin diseases. Therefore, patient organizations play a crucial role in providing patients with information, guidance, and moral support.

France Acné Ados Adultes was created in 2020 and is the only patient organization in France exclusively dedicated to people suffering from acne, whether they are teenagers or adults.

*“What pushed me to create the organization was the fact that acne is “perceived as a common disease”, and that more than 70% of patients are not satisfied with their doctor’s treatment of this condition. Acne is not a harmless dermatosis, it has a very strong psychological impact. Let’s not forget that 8 in 10 teenagers are affected by acne and that adolescence is a period of transition, crisis, and upheaval where self-image is harmed by social media. Young people with acne often feel excluded and even ashamed of how they look”* explains **Clémence Legrand, President of the organization France Acné Ados Adultes.**

According to the French Dermatology Society’s “Objectifs Peau” study, acne is the most common skin disease in France, affecting 3.3 million people.

# About Pierre Fabre

Pierre Fabre is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest dermo-cosmetics laboratory in the world, the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest private French pharmaceutical group and the market leader in France for products sold over the counter in pharmacies. Its portfolio includes several medical franchises and international brands, including Pierre Fabre Oncology, Pierre Fabre Dermatology, Eau Thermale Avène, Klorane, Ducray, René Furterer, A-Derma, Naturactive, and Pierre Fabre Oral Care.

In 2020, Pierre Fabre generated €2.3 billion in revenues, 65% of which came from international sales. Established in the Occitanie region since its creation, and manufacturing over 95 % of its products in France, the Group employs some 10,000 people worldwide. Its products are distributed in about 130 countries.

Pierre Fabre is 86%-owned by the Pierre Fabre Foundation, a government-recognised public-interest foundation, and secondarily by its own employees through an international employee stock ownership plan.

In 2020, Ecocert Environnement assessed the Group's corporate social and environmental responsibility approach in accordance with the ISO 26000 sustainable development standard for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year and confirmed its "Excellence" level.

Further information about Pierre Fabre can be found at [www.pierre-fabre.com](http://www.pierre-fabre.com), [@PierreFabre](https://twitter.com/PierreFabre).

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