

The Impact of Psoriasis

Because psoriasis can superficially resemble other skin conditions, sufferers often struggle with perceptions that their disease is a minor nuisance. In fact, psoriasis can have a major physical and emotional impact on sufferers. It is also associated with psoriatic arthritis and other potential health concerns.

What is the physical impact of psoriasis?^{4,9}

Psoriasis most commonly appears on the scalp, knees, elbows and torso. But psoriasis can develop anywhere, including the nails, palms, soles, genitals, and very infrequently on the face. Often the lesions appear symmetrically, which means in the same place on the right and left sides of the body.

In addition to skin symptoms, many psoriasis patients can develop psoriatic arthritis, which combines skin symptoms with arthritis symptoms, including joint pain and inflammation.

What is the emotional impact of psoriasis?¹⁰

For the most part, people with psoriasis function normally. Sometimes people experience low self-esteem because of the psoriasis. Psoriasis is often misunderstood by the public, which can make social interactions difficult. This may lead to emotional reactions such as anxiety, anger, embarrassment, and depression.

What is psoriatic arthritis?^{9,11}

Psoriatic arthritis, which affects up to 30 percent of people with psoriasis, is similar to rheumatoid arthritis, with less severe effect on the joints. The joints and the soft tissue around them become swollen and stiff. Psoriatic arthritis can affect the fingers and toes and may involve the neck, lower back, knees and ankles.

In severe cases, it can be disabling and cause irreversible damage to joints.

Are there other health concerns associated with psoriasis?¹²

Psoriasis was previously thought to affect primarily the skin. Our understanding of the co morbidities that may be associated with the disease has grown significantly.

The cardiovascular risk factors, such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, are increased in psoriasis patients.