



The role of a cosmetologist in the education of people with psoriasis

Rola kosmetyka w edukacji osób chorujących na łuszczycę

ABSTRACT

Psoriasis is a chronic, inflammatory, and non-contagious skin condition that extends beyond physical symptoms, significantly impacting the quality of life and daily functioning of those affected. The complex nature of the condition, its unpredictable course, and the risk of social stigma contribute to a high demand for reliable information.

This study aimed to analyse the most important information needs of people with psoriasis and to define the role of the cosmetologist in educational support and in addressing the psychosocial consequences of the condition.

The limited time available for dermatological consultations means that the role of other specialists, including cosmetologists, is growing. An important element of comprehensive cosmetological care is educating clients on the importance of daily self-care, with particular emphasis on proper care of the skin barrier, diet, and lifestyle.

Keywords: psoriasis, cosmetologist, quality of life, information needs, skin care, education.

STRESZCZENIE

Łuszczycą to przewlekła, zapalna i niezakaźna choroba skóry, która nie ogranicza się wyłącznie do objawów fizycznych, lecz w istotny sposób wpływa na jakość życia i codzienne funkcjonowanie osób nią dotkniętych. Złożony charakter schorzenia, nieprzewidywalny przebieg oraz ryzyko stygmatyzacji społecznej przyczyniają się do wysokiego zapotrzebowania na rzetelną wiedzę.

Celem pracy była analiza najważniejszych potrzeb informacyjnych osób chorujących na łuszczycę oraz określenie roli kosmetyka w procesie wsparcia edukacyjnego oraz psychospołecznych konsekwencji schorzenia.

Ograniczony czas konsultacji dermatologicznych sprawia, że rośnie rola innych specjalistów, w tym kosmetyków. Ważnym elementem kompleksowej opieki kosmetycznej jest wskazanie klientom znaczenia codziennej samoopieki, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem prawidłowej pielęgnacji bariery naskórkowej, diety i stylu życia.

Słowa kluczowe: łuszczycą, kosmetyk, jakość życia, potrzeby informacyjne, pielęgnacja skóry, edukacja.

INTRODUCTION

Psoriasis is a chronic, inflammatory, and non-contagious skin disease. This condition is characterized by a relatively high prevalence. In Poland, the frequency of occurrence is 2.99% [1]. Psoriasis affects between 0.6% and 6.5% of people in

Europe [2]. Consequently, the average prevalence worldwide is 4.4% [3]. The incidence of psoriasis varies depending on the patient's age (more common in adults, ranging from 0.51% to 11.43%) and geographic region (more common in



countries farther from the equator) [4-6], with a gradually increasing trend in prevalence associated with obesity [7-9] and smoking [10, 11]. Psoriasis sometimes affects the joints – on average, 20% of people with plaque psoriasis also have psoriatic arthritis [12]. However, some studies indicate that psoriatic arthritis may affect up to 30% of patients with plaque psoriasis [13]. Psoriasis can develop at any age, with peak incidence during adolescence and after the age of 50. Its complex nature, unpredictable course, and visible skin lesions pose medical and psychosocial challenges. Depending on the severity of the disease, people with psoriasis often struggle with a reduced quality of life, stigmatization, and difficulties in daily life. As a result, in addition to dermatological care, it is also important to provide comprehensive support, including reliable information on many aspects of the disease, especially regarding skin care. The demand for knowledge among people with psoriasis is high, and meeting these needs can have a positive impact on the course of the disease itself, adherence to treatment recommendations, and the patient's overall well-being. Although the dermatologist remains the primary source of information and the treating physician, the limited time available during a clinic visit often prevents a full discussion of all the issues troubling the patient. In this context, other specialists play a greater role: nurses and cosmetologists, who can serve as a valuable link in the process of educating and providing informational support to people with psoriasis [14, 15].

It is worth distinguishing between these two concepts: informing involves conveying facts, whereas educating is the process of shaping skills and attitudes. Integrating both of these approaches falls within the scope of a cosmetologist's professional competencies; by combining reliable knowledge transfer with practical skincare instruction, they support individuals with psoriasis in proper self-care.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study aimed to review the current scientific literature. The literature search was conducted using scientific databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The following keywords were used in the material selection process: *psoriasis, cosmetology, education, informational needs, skin care*, and their Polish equivalents. The analysis covered articles published between 2004 and 2025, with particular emphasis on publications from the last decade. The review included review articles and original studies that substantively addressed informational and psychosocial support, as well as the conditions for proper skin care among individuals using the services of cosmetology clinics.

INFORMATION NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH PSORIASIS

People with psoriasis demonstrate a strong need for detailed information about their condition. A full understanding of

the nature of the disease and early identification of available treatment options are crucial for patients' active participation in the treatment process and for improving their quality of life [14].

General information about the disease

Psoriasis sufferers exhibit a strong need for comprehensive information about their illness including its causes, symptoms, if it is a chronic disease, and whether it is possible to achieve long-term remission. It is very important for understanding the disease, accepting it, and committing to treatment to realize that psoriasis is not merely a cosmetic defect, but a chronic inflammatory skin disease with a complex etiopathogenesis, involving significant genetic factors and immune disorders. It is often triggered by stress and existing foci of internal infection within the body. Sometimes, these include long-standing, undiagnosed, and therefore untreated inflammatory conditions in the body, such as inflamed palatine tonsils, sinusitis, and others. People with psoriasis most often expect a clear explanation of the disease's pathogenesis, the factors triggering its flare-ups, and information regarding the natural course of the condition, which is characterized by periods of remission and relapse. Research indicates that patients generally do not receive, do not fully understand, or do not retain all the information provided to them about their disease, especially in the initial period following diagnosis, which points to the need for systematic education [14, 16, 17].

Educating people with psoriasis involves correcting misconceptions and myths. The stigma and social rejection that people with psoriasis occasionally experience are directly countered by educating patients and others around them about the fact that psoriasis is not contagious. According to scientific reports, insufficient knowledge about the nature of this disease can lead to stigmatizing attitudes toward people with psoriasis, which is wrongly perceived by those unfamiliar with the condition as the result of poor or even lack of personal hygiene. Providing basic knowledge about the disease is the starting point for building awareness among people with psoriasis [18-20].

Treatment options

A very important area of education is the available therapeutic methods, including topical treatment, phototherapy, and systemic and biologic therapies. The anticipated duration of treatment, as well as the risk and nature of potential side effects, should always be clearly communicated. A lack of reliable information about the pathogenesis of psoriasis often leads to unrealistic expectations, which may result in the patient discontinuing therapy. The choice of treatment strategy should take into account the individual preferences of the patient with psoriasis and their cognitive abilities. Jointly defining treatment goals and feasible procedures in the dermatology clinic significantly increases satisfaction and the effectiveness of the measures taken [14, 21-23].

Prognosis and course of the disease

People with psoriasis expect information on how quickly their condition progresses, how it can be managed and symptoms reduced, and what the potential long-term consequences and complications of psoriasis might be. Understanding the chronic nature of psoriasis and the potential for recurrent flare-ups is crucial for a person with the condition to be psychologically prepared and to be able to create coping mechanisms during more trying times.

An essential component of educating a person with psoriasis is raising awareness of the risk of developing comorbid conditions. This knowledge allows for early identification of risks and optimization of treatment and care. The most important clinical associations include several elements [16, 24, 25]:

- Psoriatic arthritis, which affects up to 30.0% of people with psoriasis. Joint changes may precede skin symptoms or appear several years after their onset.
- Nail changes are diagnosed periodically in 40-50% of people with psoriasis vulgaris. Their severity typically correlates with the duration of the underlying condition.
- A high prevalence of nail changes, which rises to as high as 87.0% in people with psoriatic arthritis.
- Cardiovascular diseases, manifested, among other things, by an increased incidence of hypertension.
- Metabolic disorders, including obesity, diabetes, insulin resistance, and hypercholesterolemia.
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

Awareness of these health risks enables people with psoriasis to recognize potential symptoms of complications early and take appropriate diagnostic and/or therapeutic measures in collaboration with their doctor. Education in this area contributes to a holistic view of psoriasis, not only as a skin disease (and sometimes also a joint disease), but also as a systemic condition.

Self-care and managing psoriasis in daily life

Patients have a high demand for information, primarily regarding the practical aspects of managing psoriasis in daily life. These individuals seek advice primarily on proper skin care practices to quickly alleviate symptoms and improve quality of life. Proper skin care, meaning care based on the selection of appropriate products and a systematic regimen, is essential for the effective management of psoriasis and accelerates the healing of skin lesions during flare-ups. Information about recommended, appropriate topical preparations, medications, cosmetics, application techniques, and avoiding exposure of the skin to irritants is very important for the patient. The basis of daily skin care for a person with psoriasis is thorough cleansing of the skin, followed by the application of appropriate moisturizing and emollient preparations (emollients) [26-28].

Patient education for people with psoriasis should also include guidance on how diet and lifestyle affect the course

of the disease. Patients should also be aware of the importance of a healthy diet, which includes avoiding stimulants. Smoking is not recommended, as it increases the number and severity of lesions, and patients should be taught stress management techniques, as stress can exacerbate psoriatic lesions. The recommended diet for psoriasis should be rich in selected vegetables, fruits, healthy fats, and fatty fish, and should include whole grains, while limiting the consumption of sweets, salty snacks, and highly processed foods. Regular physical activity is also recommended, as it plays a significant role in preventing psoriasis-related complications such as obesity and, in most cases, positively impacts the patient's well-being. Practical advice on modifying daily habits and activities can help people with psoriasis better manage their condition [29-31].

Psychosocial impact

Patients' social and psychological functioning is impacted by psoriasis. They require specialized support in managing stigmatization, anxiety, sadness, and self-esteem concerns, particularly at the beginning of the illness and for some even later. The visible skin lesions associated with psoriasis can lead to social rejection, which has a decidedly negative impact on personal and social lives. It is estimated that as many as 30-40% of people with psoriasis suffer from significant psychological stress, which necessitates viewing psoriasis not only as a somatic disease but also as a condition with multidimensional psychological aspects [18, 22, 32-34]. As emphasized in the literature, understanding the significance of psoriasis's impact on the psyche of those struggling with this condition is essential for all professionals who come into contact with it. The feelings of shame and stigmatization that may accompany a person with psoriasis can lead to avoidance of social contact and withdrawal from social life for some patients, and even a reduction in family contact [19, 23, 30, 34].

Access to reliable sources of information

People with psoriasis generally actively seek information about their condition from available sources, including the Internet. For this reason, it is essential to provide access to reliable and understandable educational materials. An excess of information, or information that is false or not scientifically confirmed, can lead to misinformation and the use of ineffective or even dangerous, treatment and care methods for psoriasis. As studies show, people with psoriasis generally forget some of the recommendations given to them solely verbally; furthermore, they find medical terminology difficult and incomprehensible, which demonstrates that they therefore require educational support based not only on verbal communication but also on written materials, such as leaflets and other resources [15, 35, 36].

Reliable sources of information, from the perspective of medical professionals, may include materials presenting

current knowledge about the disease and prepared by dermatological societies and other institutions or individuals who deal with this condition professionally and/or scientifically. Referring clients to reputable and reliable websites, educational brochures, or opportunities to participate in educational programs can help them acquire reliable, verified knowledge and better manage their own condition [16, 35, 37].

THE ROLE OF THE COSMETOLOGIST IN EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CLIENTS WITH PSORIASIS

As a specialist in skin care, the cosmetologist can become an important part of the team supporting dermatology patients, complementing the doctor's efforts through education, care instruction, and monitoring of skin care habits. The foundation for helping clients looking for ways to reduce psoriasis symptoms and enhance skin health is the cosmetologist's expertise in choosing cosmetics and safe skincare procedures. Cosmetic clinics offer a wide range of skin diagnostic services and treatments that can benefit the client, thereby enhancing the professional image of this specialist [38].

Skincare education and selection of targeted cosmetics

The basis for reducing excessive scaling and moisturizing the skin is professional guidance on the selection and use of appropriate cosmetic products, such as cleansing agents, moisturizing and emollient substances. The cosmetologist's task is to inform the clients that proper restoration of the lipid barrier effectively alleviates dryness, itching, and the sensation of skin tightness [39, 40]. Education regarding daily self-care should closely align with the professional, personalized selection of cosmetics and information about the desired active ingredients present in recommended products (creams, ointments, emulsions, or shampoos). The selection of active ingredients should take into account the level of transepidermal water loss (TEWL) and the presence of active inflammatory lesions.

Based on current knowledge, a cosmetologist can highlight the measurable benefits for people with psoriasis of using, among others, urea, salicylic acid, coal tar, ichthammol, allantoin, panthenol, lactic acid, ceramides, shea butter, as well as probiotics and prebiotics, which support epidermal regeneration, reduce inflammation, and facilitate the removal of hyperkeratotic plaques [41]. As a supplement to traditional forms of medical therapy, a cosmetologist may recommend safe herbal preparations. Their use, for example, in the form of baths, wraps, compresses, and sometimes also infusions, provides valuable and soothing support in the process of caring for the skin's condition for many people struggling with this condition [42].

Information on contraindicated ingredients

A cosmetologist can educate clients with psoriasis about the substances they should avoid in their at-home skincare routine. These substances can cause and/or exacerbate skin irritation and thus contribute to the worsening of skin lesions. They include strong detergents that disrupt the skin's hydrolipid barrier and increase dryness. Fragrances and dyes are potential allergens and irritants that can exacerbate redness, itching, and burning of the skin [43]. Harsh cleansers can also be harmful, as they may disrupt the skin's normal functioning by damaging the hydrolipid barrier, which slows down healing processes [44].

Instruction on proper home skincare routines

A cosmetologist can provide guidance on proper skin cleansing procedures at home and the self-application of emollients. Home care instruction should also include correct, gentle drying of the skin after bathing and regular examination of the entire skin to detect any new psoriatic lesions [29].

Selection and performance of cosmetic treatments suitable for psoriatic skin

When working with a client with psoriasis, a cosmetologist may recommend safe treatments that support therapy, including: enzymatic peels with appropriately selected acids, needle-free mesotherapy, oxygen infusion, and sonophoresis using appropriate formulations. Each treatment should be preceded by a detailed cosmetic consultation and an assessment of the skin's condition. It is recommended to avoid mechanical peels (granular, microdermabrasion), which carry the risk of damaging the epidermis and stimulating lesions, resulting in the appearance of new ones at the site of injury (the so-called Koebner phenomenon). When interviewing clients in the salon, the cosmetologist should always ask about any chronic skin conditions that may contraindicate specific cosmetic treatments. In individuals with psoriasis, the following procedures are not recommended during active psoriatic lesions: mechanical peels, waxing, sugaring, or laser hair removal, intradermal and subcutaneous injections, cryolipolysis, and treatments using physical stimuli, such as plasma technology and laser treatments in the area of active lesions. In the case of psoriatic lesions on the skin of the hands and feet, as well as within the nails (nail psoriasis), the use of sharp tools (nail clippers, omega blades) for cuticle removal or shaping the nail folds should be avoided. This can lead to injury and trigger or exacerbate psoriatic lesions in these areas [38].

Cosmetic camouflage (concealing makeup)

Skin conditions, particularly those that are highly visible and located on the face, neck, and hands, often have a significant impact on the daily functioning of people affected by skin diseases such as psoriasis. For some people with psoriasis,

cosmetic camouflage makeup can be applied to reduce feelings of stigmatization, thereby improving quality of life. This is particularly important for individuals with visible skin conditions, especially during essential personal or professional life events [45].

Recommendations for appropriate clothing and fabrics

It is worth remembering that for people with psoriasis, choosing the right clothing that ensures skin comfort is also crucial. It is recommended to wear clothing made of natural, breathable fabrics, such as cotton, linen, or viscose, and to avoid synthetic materials, which are not very breathable and may exacerbate skin irritation. The proper selection of clothing and footwear (comfortable and not causing pressure on the skin, which could trigger the development of lesions) is of significant importance in general daily care [29].

A professional framework for educational support

One of the cornerstones of effective treatment, especially for chronic conditions such as psoriasis, is effective communication between the specialist – the cosmetologist – and the client. This requires the use of clear, understandable language that avoids unnecessary medical jargon and is tailored to the client's educational background and emotional state. It is worth emphasising that communication techniques such as paraphrasing (rephrasing the content in different ways) or the “teach-back” method (a communication technique in which the listener is asked to repeat the information in their own words) are helpful in practice, as they allow for verifying the degree of understanding of the information conveyed. It is important to remember that the effectiveness of communication depends on situational factors, such as the time of day, fatigue, or the client's mood, which influence their readiness to receive information; therefore, the timing and format of the conversation should be flexibly adjusted, for example, if the client is not ready for a longer conversation, it should be rescheduled for another day [46-48].

The process of supporting people with psoriasis is complemented by appropriately designed educational materials. It is believed that all brochures or informational leaflets should be short, concise, and written in simple language, enriched with visual elements that facilitate the retention of important content. It is also worth considering generational differences in preferences regarding the form of communication. Younger people are more likely to use digital materials and infographics, while older clients tend to prefer traditional paper leaflets with large fonts and a clear layout. For the elderly, educational content must be adapted to their cognitive abilities [49-51].

It should be noted that verbal communication is also supported to some extent by the aesthetics and layout of the cosmetologist's office, which builds client trust and aids their concentration during the visit – a neat professional uniform

and a tidy, well-lit interior of the office facilitate the reception of information and enhance the listener's comfort. Additionally, the consistency of verbal and nonverbal communication – including tone of voice, word choice, eye contact, and facial expressions – strengthens the therapeutic relationship and enhances the effectiveness of collaboration [48, 52-54].

SUMMARY

The information needs of people with psoriasis are multidimensional and encompass both education about the mechanisms of the disease and practical aspects of daily self-care. The cosmetologist, with specialized knowledge of the functioning of the skin barrier and the skin itself, serves as a crucial link in the educational support system for clients struggling with psoriasis. Their role is particularly significant in selecting targeted skincare products, avoiding irritants, and implementing safe, sometimes recommended treatment procedures. For cosmetological support to be fully safe and effective, all skincare recommendations must be strictly tailored to the client's current skin condition, the phase of the disease (remission vs. flare-up), and their individual psychophysical capabilities.

The measures taken in a cosmetology clinic should always be complementary to the medical treatment being administered. The role of the cosmetologist is not only to motivate the client to cooperate closely with the dermatologist but also to support them in adhering to medical recommendations.

The continuous development of communication skills also remains an important component of comprehensive cosmetology care. The proper structure of communication between the cosmetologist and the client – including, above all, the use of simple, understandable language – determines the extent to which the client absorbs the information, which significantly facilitates the development of healthy habits and optimizes the final results of the recommended skincare procedures.

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