

The Psychological Burden and Life Quality in Patients with Skin Disease

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Flora Nicol Balieva from the Department of Dermatology at Stavanger University Hospital defended her doctoral thesis titled *The psychological burden and life quality in patients with skin disease: A European study in dermatological patients* at the University of Oslo on October 17, 2019. Her supervisors were Florence Dalgard and Lars Lien. Berndt Stenberg from Umeå University and Kjersti Danielsen from the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø were first and second opponents. Available from: <https://www.duo.uio.no/handle/10852/70682?-show=full>.

Knowledge of the psychological burden of skin disease in the general dermatological population is scarce. We collected data on the distribution of skin diseases in Norwegian and European outpatients, explored the prevalence of psychiatric comorbidity and reduction in life quality to draw attention to skin conditions that have the highest risk of negatively impacting health-related quality of life.

The thesis shows in its first part the high association between skin disease and psychiatric comorbidity, especially in Norwegian patients, where depression and anxiety are higher than seen in the other participating European countries (paper I).

In its second part, the thesis confirms the large impact skin conditions have on patients' wellbeing, differentiating between different aspects of health-related quality of life (paper II). Patients with chronic inflammatory skin diseases reported reduced health-related quality of life comparable to patients with chronic obstructive lung disease, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease and cancers. These findings are important in the prioritization of resource allocation between medical fields and within dermatological sub-specialities.

Finally, we show that treatment for skin disease contributes considerably to reducing health-related quality of life: the burden of dermatological treatment should be considered when planning therapy, designing instruments for evaluating health-related quality of life and when considering new dermatological therapeutic options (paper III).

LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

I. Balieva F, Lien L, Kupfer J, Halvorsen JA, Dalgard F. Are common skin diseases among Norwegian dermatological outpatients associated with psychological problems compared with controls? An observational study. *Acta Derm Venereol* 2016 ; 96: 227–231. doi: 10.2340/00015555-2200.



Flora Balieva before entering the university auditorium.

- II. Balieva F, Kupfer J, Lien L, Gieler U, Finlay AY, Tomás-Aragónés L, et al. The burden of common skin diseases assessed with the EQ5D™: a European multicentre study in 13 countries. *Br J Dermatol* 2017; 176: 1170–1178. doi: 10.1111/bjd.15280.
- III. Balieva F, Finlay AY, Kupfer J, Aragonés LT, Lien L, Gieler U, et al. The role of therapy in impairing quality of life in dermatological patients: A multinational study. *Acta Derm Venereol* 2018; 98: 563–569. doi: 10.2340/00015555-2918