

LIVING WITH ACNE: PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT AND SOCIAL ADAPTATION

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Abstract. Acne is an inflammatory skin condition that primarily begins during adolescence but can persist into adulthood. It is not just an aesthetic issue; it significantly affects an individual's psychological well-being and social life. People suffering from acne often experience low self-esteem, depression, and social challenges. This thesis explores the psychological effects of acne and its impact on social adaptation.

Keywords: appearance, psychological impact, depression, mental health, dermatological treatment, healthy lifestyle,

People living with acne often feel uncomfortable about their appearance, leading to various psychological issues:

- Low self-esteem – Acne can reduce self-confidence, making individuals avoid mirrors or taking photos.
- Depression and stress – Studies show that people with acne are more prone to depression and anxiety disorders.
- Social phobia – Many individuals with acne feel uncomfortable in social settings and may avoid public appearances.

Although the psychological impact of acne varies from person to person, many affected individuals experience feelings of isolation or discrimination. Acne also influences a person's daily social activities:

- Education and work – Students with acne may hesitate to speak in front of an audience, and appearance can play a role in job applications.
- Friendships and social interactions – Some individuals with acne tend to withdraw from social groups or prefer solitude.
- Romantic relationships – Acne can affect self-perception, making people feel less attractive and hesitant to enter romantic relationships.

Research suggests that acne directly affects quality of life and social interactions. Cultural and Gender Aspects:

- **Social stigma:** In many cultures, acne is wrongly associated with poor hygiene or unhealthy habits, increasing emotional stress.
- **Media influence:** Unrealistic beauty standards in social media and advertising can worsen body image and self-comparison.
- **Gender differences:** Research shows that females tend to experience greater emotional distress due to acne compared to males, likely due to societal beauty expectations.

Causes and Contributing Factors

- **Hormonal fluctuations:** Common during puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, or as a result of conditions like PCOS.
- **Genetic predisposition:** Individuals with a family history of acne are more likely to develop it.
- **Diet and lifestyle:** High sugar intake, lack of sleep, and stress can worsen symptoms.

Various scientific studies have examined the psychological and social effects of acne:

- A 2020 study in the British Journal of Dermatology found that acne significantly impacts mental health.
- A 2018 article in JAMA Dermatology highlighted how acne lowers self-acceptance.
- Research indicates that a combination of psychological support and dermatological treatment improves patients' quality of life.

To manage the psychological and social challenges of acne, the following approaches can be effective:

1. **Dermatological treatment** – Retinoids, laser therapy, and medications help reduce acne symptoms.
2. **Psychological therapy** – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) improves self-confidence and emotional well-being.
3. **Healthy lifestyle** – A balanced diet, stress management, and adequate sleep can help alleviate acne symptoms.
4. **Social support** – Encouragement from family, friends, and support groups can make living with acne easier.

Conclusion

Acne is not only a physical condition but also has a profound impact on mental health and social life. A comprehensive approach—including dermatological treatment, psychological

support, and a healthy lifestyle—is essential to improving the well-being of people living with acne.

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