

Fact Sheet: Rheumatologists

PSORIASIS

Journey to Stability

About Psoriatic Diseases

Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory condition that affects the regeneration of skin cells.

More than one million Canadians are affected.

The negative impacts on people's quality of life, both physical and emotional, can be significant. There is no cure.

The most common form is plaque psoriasis, which affects approximately 90% of people with psoriasis. Up to 30% of people with psoriasis will develop psoriatic arthritis and 5-10% have functional disability from arthritis.

Having psoriasis may increase the risk of developing other chronic diseases, including heart attack, stroke, diabetes, cancer, depression, and liver disease.

Impacts on Patients

Most cases of psoriasis can eventually be controlled, and most people who have psoriasis can live normal lives. However, some people who have psoriasis are so self-conscious and embarrassed about their appearance that they become depressed and withdrawn.

The emotional impact of psoriasis on a person's life does not depend on the severity of the lesions. It is determined by how each person feels about the itchiness, pain and discomfort of psoriasis and the visibility of the lesions.

Psoriasis can impact every aspect of an individual's life, including their ability to work and maintain relationships. Many individuals suffer from low self-confidence, anxiety, depression, pain, itchiness and, as a result, sleep deprivation.

Mild



<3% of the body.*

Generally involves isolated patches on the knees, elbows, scalp, hands and feet.



Typically little effect on the quality of life.

Moderate



3-10% of the body.*

Generally appears on the arms, torso, scalp and other regions.

Often results in concern about others' reactions to visible lesions.



Generally affects the quality of life.

Severe



>10% of the body.*

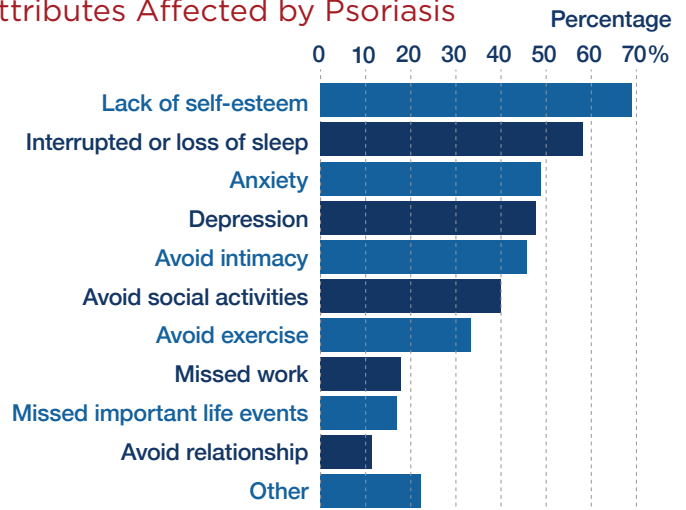
May affect large areas of skin.

Psoriasis of the face and palms/soles may be considered as severe.

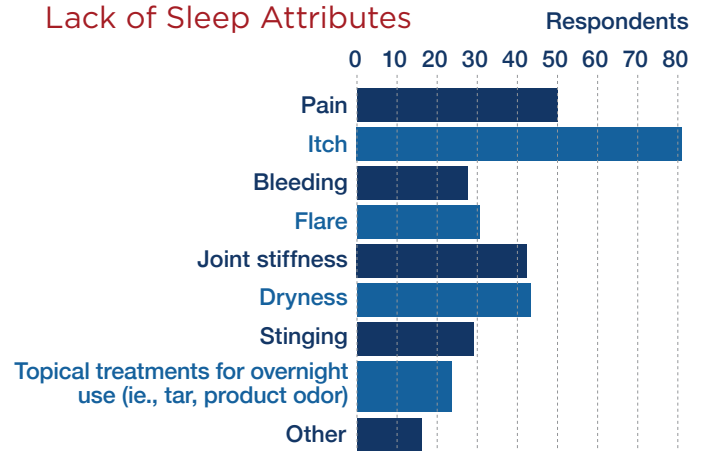


Typically has a severe impact on the quality of life.

Attributes Affected by Psoriasis



Lack of Sleep Attributes



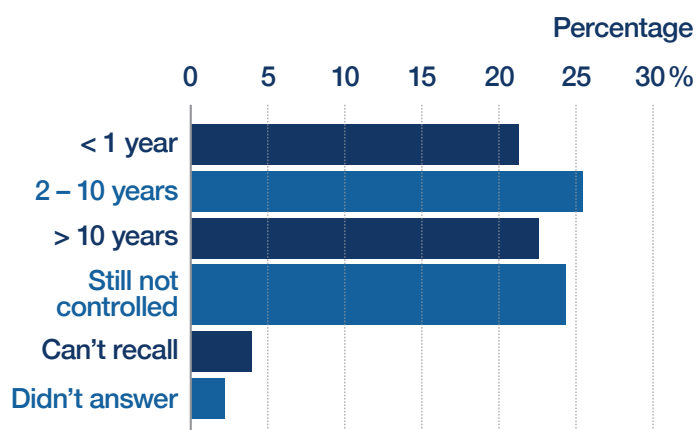
*To assess the area of involvement, consider that your palm covers about 1% of the skin's surface

The Journey to Stability

Stability was defined as an individual's personal comfort with the effectiveness of treatment, the degree of skin clearance, and quality of life.

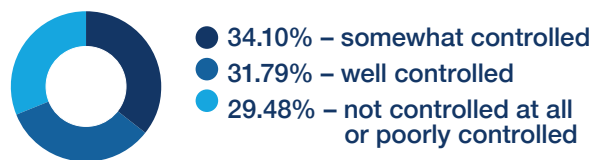
In Canada, the journey to stability is often onerous and usually involves failing on several different medications before finding one that is effective. A considerable number of people surveyed have lived for 10+ years with uncontrolled psoriasis before finding a medication or treatment that controlled or managed their psoriasis.

Length of Time to Controlled/Stable



Treatment decisions are often difficult and emotional. When respondents changed medications because they weren't effective, the majority (65.32%) were negatively impacted.

When asked how well the respondents' psoriasis is currently controlled, only about a third of respondents felt their condition was "well controlled":

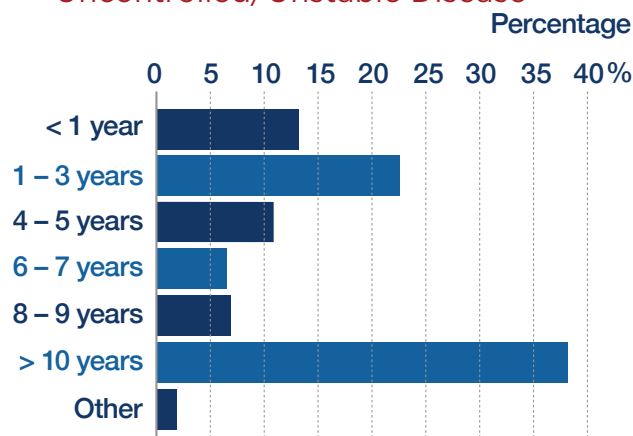


Knowledge of biologics and biosimilars was low among the people living with psoriasis surveyed, with the majority of respondents classifying themselves as knowing very little or only having some knowledge of this class of medications.

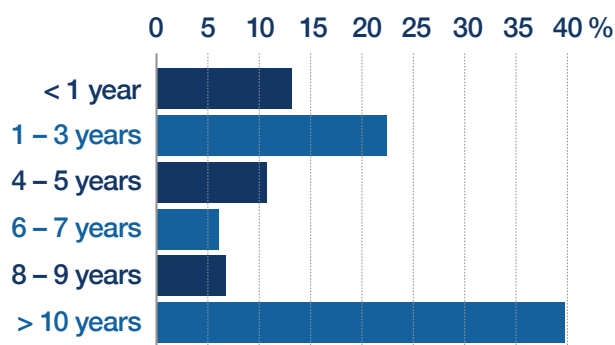
Without education and without informed decision-making with their treating clinician, people who are stable after a lengthy and emotional journey reacted strongly to the possibility of being switched to another medication for non-medical reasons.

UV Light Therapy, which works for many psoriasis patients, is only available in a limited number of large hospitals in urban centres. Unfortunately, its public coverage is shrinking across Canada.

Individuals Living with Uncontrolled/Unstable Disease



Length of Time Individuals Have Lived With Psoriasis



How You Can Help

- Consider asking people questions about their feelings, their experiences, and determining their personal goals related to the condition.
- To increase adherence, talk about the pros and cons of different treatment options.
- Connect people living with psoriasis with support, including organizations like ours.
- Monitor patients living with psoriatic diseases for the development of co-morbid, chronic conditions.
- Work with your patients to best support their full range of needs – physical, mental, and emotional – including referring them to other health care professionals as needed.
- Encourage your professional association to advocate for greater access to UV Light Therapy for people living with psoriatic diseases

Methods & Limitations

The Journey to Stability Survey was open from September 15 to November 8, 2017. Online surveys were completed by 286 English respondents, with the majority (96.5%) being adults living with psoriasis. The survey findings only represent the experiences of Canadians who responded. There was no accompanying educational material provided to respondents, so any limitations in their own knowledge (e.g. about new treatments like biologics or biosimilars) were not addressed. In addition, sample bias is possible as people dealing with issues related to their psoriasis may be more apt to respond to such a survey rather than people who have achieved greater control over their condition.