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Facial skin lesions: a psychological burden for lupus patients

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Background:

Self-esteem and body image are key components of quality of life. Facial lesions associated with lupus can affect these dimensions.

Objectives:

Our study aims to assess the impact of these lesions on the self-esteem of patients with lupus.

Methods:

This is a descriptive cross-sectional study involving patients with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) followed in a rheumatology department. The included patients completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) questionnaire. All data were collected with patient consent and analyzed using SPSS statistical software.

Results:

Forty-five patients meeting the 2019 ACR/EULAR classification criteria for systemic lupus erythematosus were included. There were 7 men and 38 women, with a female-to-male ratio of 5.4. The median age was 46 ± 4.2 years [19-66 years], and the average disease duration was 8.6 ± 7.2 years. Thirty-two (71.1%) patients had cutaneous manifestations. Twenty-one patients (46.67%) had a butterfly-shaped facial erythema, 7 patients (15.56%) had erythematous lesions on the forearms, and 2 women had mouth ulcers. Raynaud's phenomenon was observed in 3 patients (6.67%). Renal involvement was seen in 2 patients (4.4%). The mean Rosenberg SelfEsteem Scale score was 25.1 ± 2.1, reflecting low self-esteem. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem score was negatively correlated with cutaneous involvement (r = -0.27; p = 0.04). Low self-esteem levels were more strongly associated with facial symptoms, and there was no correlation between the RSE and gender, age, or renal manifestations.

Conclusion:

Patients' perception of their facial involvement in systemic lupus erythematosus is poor and can be considered an important component of their self-esteem. Effective interventions should be implemented during follow-up to improve body image function and satisfaction.