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INTRODUCTION

Skin diseases, regardless of their ethnological differences and their particular evolution, have the following in common: they are often visible and exposed to others. Although the problem of apparent skin diseases is clearly concentrated in the hands and face, to date, no study has evaluated the prevalence of these dermatoses in real-life settings in a large population-based multinational representative sample.

MATERIAL & METHODS

This study was a population-based using a representative sample of the general population aged ≥18 years from six countries (Canada, China, Italy, Spain, Germany & France). All participants were asked to complete a digital structured questionnaire. To subjects who confirmed the presence of one or more skin diseases, we asked them about their respective locations (hands, face, body)

RESULTS

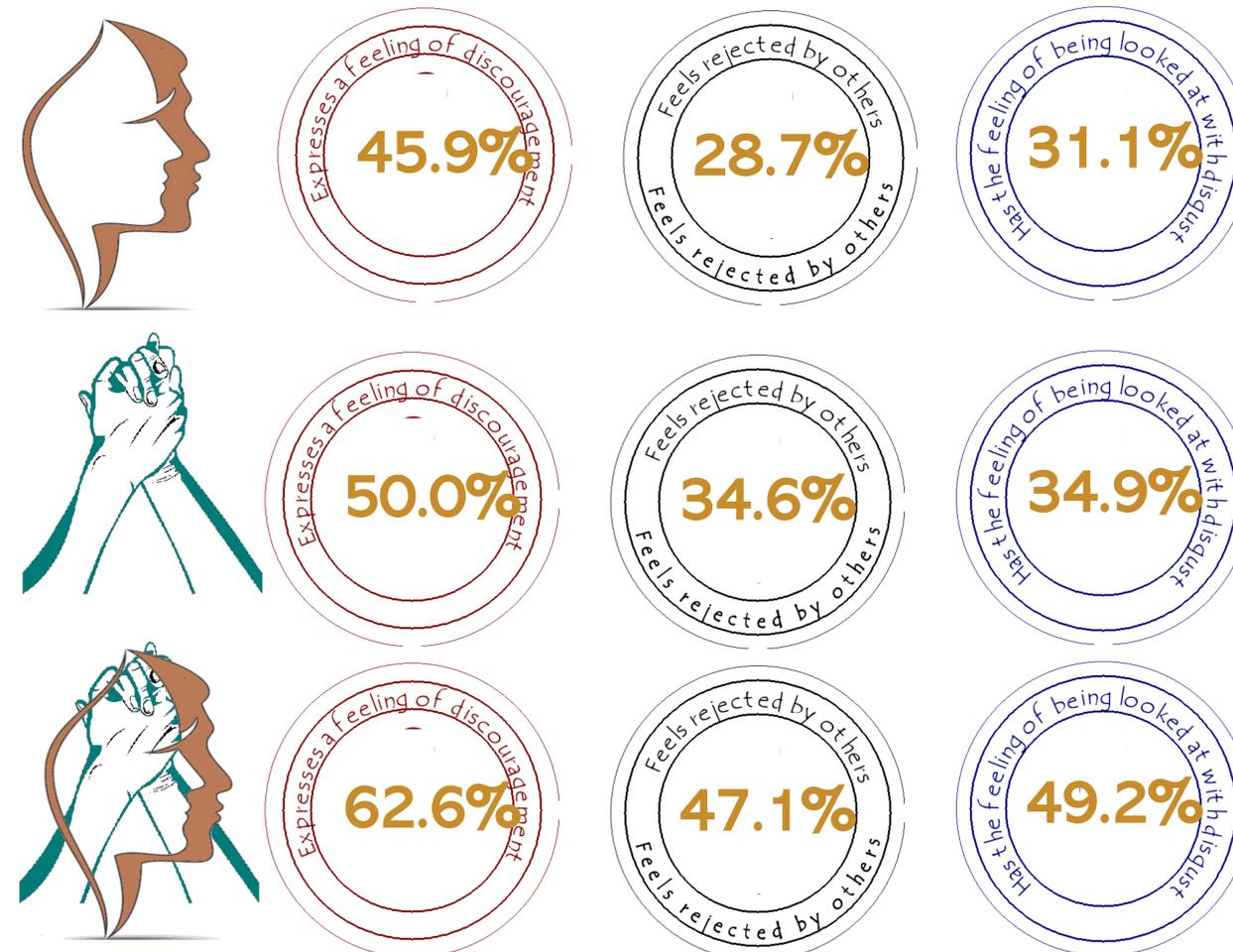
A total of 13,138 adult participants responded to the questionnaire (2,011 Canadian, 3,050 Chinese, 2,000 French, 2,000 Italian, 2,040 Spanish and 2,037 German). We are interested in eight emblematic skin diseases (acne, psoriasis, eczema, vitiligo, ichthyosis, chronic hand eczema, rosacea and hidradenitis suppurativa) If 3450 individuals declared having a skin disease, 3042 of them claimed one of the 8 emblematic skin disease

A total of 75.3% of patients with one of these 8 skin disease reported a localization of their dermatosis on the face and/or hands. Twenty-five percent of patients reporting apparent dermatitis on the hands considered it to be a handicap at work. Thirty-four percent reported having had this condition since childhood, and 50% thought that this condition had caused difficulties at school. Twenty-six percent reported difficulty using a smartphone or computer keyboard because of the skin condition on their hands, and 32.2% said that they were limited in their daily activities.

Twenty-eight percent said that they thought their life would have been different without skin damage to their hands, and 34% said they had already tried to hide the damage. Eighteen percent of patients reporting a visible skin condition on the face considered it to be a professional handicap. Forty-eight percent said they had had this condition since childhood; among them, 39% said they had been teased, and 18% had been excluded from a group of friends because of this condition.

Twenty-six percent said that they thought their lives would have been different without facial impairment, and 20% said that their professional lives would have been richer. Forty-seven percent admitted to having tried to camouflage this condition

However, a significant difference was found between men and women (58% vs. 32%, p values <0.0001)



DISCUSSION

The consequences of skin diseases on the face and hands have not been systematically and specifically studied. Whatever the country, the localizations of skin disease on hands and/ or face are very frequent. In fact ¾ of patients with skin disease have such apparent lesions. Our study is the first to assess the consequences and impact of apparent dermatoses in the context of real, everyday life.

The functional and aesthetic handicap has repercussions that go far beyond the simple management of skin disease. One responder in two reported suffering from facial dermatitis since childhood. Surprisingly, involvement of hands had also important consequences on patients, that are not limited to a functional handicap. Dermatologists do care about the face, but they are probably less concerned by hand involvement that can impair social life as well as facial involvement does. Taking into account involvement of apparent skin lesions might help dermatologist to better address their patient's needs.