

Racial and ethnic disparities of feelings of stigmatisation among patients living with vitiligo. ALL Project.

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INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVE

Vitiligo is a relatively common condition, affecting around 0.5-2% of people in the world. Vitiligo causes isolation, stigmatization, loss of self-esteem, depression, and self-consciousness. Dark-skinned people are thought to have a higher burden of vitiligo in their daily life and decreased quality of life have been reported in those darker skinned individuals as compared to fair-skinned patients. The objective of this study was to investigate and to compare the prevalence of stigmatization associated with vitiligo among different ethnic population.

MATERIAL & METHODS

Patients with vitiligo were selected from All project, an international online conducted in the general population (50552 individuals over 16)) across 20 countries from 5 continents.

Vitiligo (confirmed by a physician) was self-reported by the patients. Patients with vitiligo who agreed to specify their ethnic origin [EADV STUDY] and to rate their skin as one of the six Fitzpatrick skin phototypes (FSP) were selected. Four groups were distinguished: African descent, with FSP V-VI] (AD), Caucasian descent with FSP type 1-3 (C) , East-Asian cohort from South Korea and Japan (EA) and Indian Cohort (I). Patients were further divided in two groups, those who acknowledge vitiligo on at least one visible area (head, face, neck, arms or hands) and those who report involvement of non-visible area (abdomen, legs, feet, genitals).

RESULTS

From the 764 vitiligo respondents (VR), a population of 488 reported both their FSP and their ethnicity. Of these, 246 (50.4%) were males and 242 (49.6%) were females with a mean age of respectively 38.22+/-12.64.

There were 40 (13.9%) patients with AD 230 (79.9%) with Caucasian, 86 (29.9%) with EA and respondents and 132 (45.8%) with Indian descent. Of the 364 (74.9%) patients who declared vitiligo on visible areas, 268 (54.9%) felt ostracized or rejected by others, 271 (55.5%) felt looked at with disgust, 270 (55.3%) reported that people avoided touching them, and 267 (54.7%) reported that people avoided approaching them because of their vitiligo. One hundred twenty-four VR were considered to have no feelings of stigmatization (FS). The prevalence of FS was not significantly different among the four ethnic patient groups of VR, with the exception of Indian respondents who were more likely to experience feelings of stigma than Caucasian descendants (89.4% versus 63.5% in the non FS population; P = 3.55E-05) .

The prevalence of FS in patients with lesions on visible areas and those without lesions on visible areas was not significantly different (71.2% VS 77.3%; P 0,68)

Indian respondents were more likely to experience feelings of stigma than Caucasian descendants. Indian patients were more likely to report denial to take a selfie due to vitiligo than East Asian (87.1% vs 65.1%, p0,011) and Caucasian (87.1% vs 53.5%, p7,18E-08). A total of 217/474 (45.8%) VR reported using corrective makeup to avoid stigma linked with vitiligo. Accordingly, prevalence of FS was significantly higher in VS using corrective makeup (187/217= 86.2% vs 171/256=66.8%, p 0,0002)



Table 1

Association with feelings of stigmatization in the four ethnic and racial patient groups n (%)

	African descent n=40	East Asian respondents n=86	Caucasian descent n=230	Indian respondents n=132	Total n=488
VP with FS	33 (82,5%)	67 (77,9%)	146 (63,5%)	118 (89,4%)	364 (74,6%)
VP who felt ostracized or rejected by others	21 (52,5%)	50 (58,10%)	103 (44,8%)	94 (71,2%)	268 (54,9%)
VP who felt looked at with disgust,	25 (62,5%)	49 (57,0%)	108 (47,0%)	89 (67,4%)	271 (55,5%)
VP who reported that people avoided touching them	22 (55,0%)	52 (60,5%)	101 (43,9%)	95 (72,0%)	270 (55,3%)
VP who reported that people avoided approaching them	23 (57,5%)	48 (55,8%)	94 (40,9%)	102 (77,3%)	267 (54,7%)

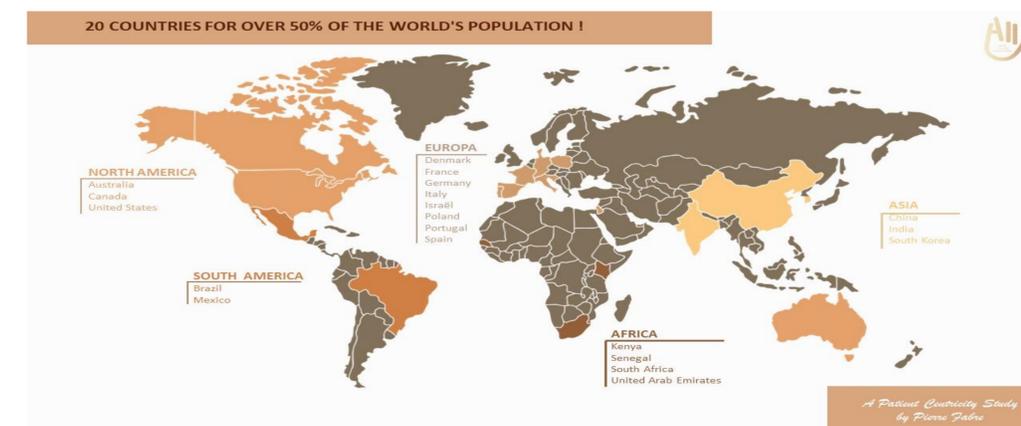


Table 2 : Association with feelings of stigmatization among VR respondents with and without lesions on visible parts n (%)

	African descent n=40	East Asian respondents n=86	Caucasian descent n=230	Indian respondents n=132	Total n=488
VR respondents with lesions on visible parts	15/20 (75,0%)	26/35 (74,3%)	62/102 (60,8%)	50/58 (86,2%)	153/215 (71,2%)
VR respondents without lesions on visible parts	18/20 (90,0%)	41/51 (80,4%)	84/128 (65,6%)	68/74 (91,9%)	211/273 (77,3%)

DISCUSSION

In conclusion, feeling of stigmatizing in individuals with vitiligo is highly prevalent among people throughout the world with a marked higher prevalence in the Indian Subcontinent. Educational campaigns targeting the general population and aiming at deciphering beliefs and behaviors linked to vitiligo is of most importance and may help reducing stigma toward persons with vitiligo.