

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

PREVALENCE OF DEPRESSION IN PATIENTS OF FACIAL HIRsutISM IN OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT OF DERMATOLOGY, KHYBER TEACHING HOSPITAL, PESHAWAR: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Background: Hirsute women have been found to experience a greater degree of psychiatric disturbance compared to the general population and a higher level of anxiety together with psychotic symptoms and interpersonal fears in relation to non-hirsute control. The aim of this study was to determine the frequency of depression in women with hirsutism in the Dermatology outpatient department, Khyber Teaching Hospital, Peshawar

Materials & Methods: This cross-sectional study was conducted in the Department of Dermatology, Khyber Teaching Hospital, Peshawar from April 10, 2021, to October 10, 2021. A total of 127 women with facial hirsutism were included. The sample size was calculated using the, "WHO sample size software" with a 95% confidence interval, 8% margin of error and prevalence of depression to be 30% in women with hirsutism. Participants were selected through consecutive non-probability sampling. Depression was assessed using the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HDRS). Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board and written informed consent was taken from all participants.

Results: Participants in the study ranged in age from 15 to 40 years; their mean age was 26.291 years, and the average length of their complaints was 5.480 months. Depression was noted in 37% of hirsutism patients. In this study, 19.7% of patients were unmarried, 80.3% of patients were married. Also, as the duration of the complaint lengthened, as indicated by our findings, women got more concerned about hirsutism.

Conclusion: We conclude from our study that hirsutism has a significant impact on the mental status of the patients which leads to depression.

KEY WORDS: Depression; Frequency; Hirsutism; Marital status.

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INTRODUCTION

The growth of abnormally coarse hair in women that is distributed in a male-pattern is known as hirsutism. The most prevalent of the several causes of excessive hair growth is polycystic ovarian disorder. However, hormonal imbalances, endocrine diseases, drug-in-

duced hirsutism, and idiopathic hirsutism are some of the other causes of hirsutism. It is recognised that the quality of life and self-esteem of the affected women are negatively impacted by this abnormal hair growth.¹ Yet, some medical professionals classify hirsutism as any unwelcoming hair development in women. The effects of ladies' unwanted hair on their psychological and social well-being have long been acknowledged.²

Depression may result from the social rejection that comes with defying social norms as well as the time, effort, and cost devoted to hair removal. Hirsute women have been reported to have higher degrees of anxiety, psychotic symptoms, and interpersonal phobias compared to non-hirsute controls, as well as a larger degree of psychiatric disorder than the overall population.³ Depressive disorders include the characteristics of sorrow, emptiness, or irritability with accompanying

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physical and cognitive alterations that have a major impact on the person's ability to function.⁴ Because of incorrect perceptions, approximately 60% of patients with depression do not seek medical assistance. Many feel that the stigma of a mental health disorder is not acceptable in society and may hinder both personal and professional life.⁵ The majority of antidepressants are proven to be effective, but each person's response to treatment may be different.⁵

Depressive disorder has a multifactorial aetiology, with genetic and environmental factors both contributing. Environmental influences include illnesses that a person is already afflicted with, hirsutism being one of those conditions. Although depression can strike individuals without a family history of the condition, first-degree relatives of depressed persons are around three times more likely to experience depression than the general population.^{6,7} The history and physical findings are used to make the diagnosis of depression. Laboratory tests are helpful to rule out medical conditions that could manifest as depressive disorder.^{8,9} In an international study by Lipton MG, et al. proved that the frequency of depression was 30% in women with facial hirsutism.¹⁰

According to a study conducted in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress in hirsutism patients was found to be 13.2%, 23.7% and 17.8%, respectively.¹¹ In our Pakistani community, depression in hirsutism was not widely studied before. In order to ascertain whether facial hirsutism is related to depression or not, as well as its frequency in married females or its relation to the chronic nature of the condition, we planned to assess the frequency of depression in women with facial hirsutism.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This Cross-Sectional Study was conducted in the Department of Dermatology, from 10th April 2021 to 10th October, 2021. The total number of patients taken were 127. Sample size was calculated using WHO sample size software with 95% confidence interval, keeping margin of error at an appropriate level and prevalence of depression to be 30% in women with facial hirsutism.¹⁰ Sampling technique was non-probability consecutive sampling. Women aged 15 to 40 years, both married or unmarried with facial hirsutism as per operational definition for one month duration were included in the study. Patients with chronic illness like hypertension, diabetes, renal disease, poor economic status (<20,000/month family income), divorced, death of a relative in the past 6 months were excluded from the study. Baseline demographic information of patients (age, marital status and duration of complaints) was taken. Written informed consent was obtained from patients, ensuring confidentiality. Data were gathered for depression according to the operational description of the researcher and patients were assessed for depression on Hamilton Depression

Rating Scale (HDRS). Lastly, data was analysed with a statistical analysis program (IBM-SPSS version- 22). When calculating categorical variables like depression and marital status, frequency and percentages were used. For quantitative data, age and length of complaints, the mean and SD were reported. Age, marital status, and length of complaints were used to categorise depression with hirsutism. Chi-square test was used with a statistically significant p-value of 0.05.

RESULTS

Among the 127 participants, the mean age was 26.29 ± 3.77 years. The average duration of their complaints was 5.48 ± 2.07 months. Depression was observed in 37% of patients with hirsutism. It was more prevalent among married patients (80.3%) compared to unmarried patients (19.7%). It was also noted that depression was more prevalent among patients with a longer duration of hirsutism.

A statistically significant association was observed between marital status (p = 0.000), duration of hirsutism (p = 0.000), and depression.

Table- I: Mean±SD of patients according to age and duration of complaints (n= 127)

Demographics		Mean±SD
1	Age (years)	26.291±3.77
2	Duration of complaints (months)	5.480±2.07

Table- II: Frequency and %age of patients according to Marital Status (n=127)

Marital Status	Frequency	%age
Married	102	80.3%
Unmarried	25	19.7%
Total	127	100%

Table- III: Frequency and %age of patients according to depression (n= 127)

Depression	Frequency	%age
Yes	47	37%
No	80	63%
Total	127	100%

Table-IV: Stratification of Depression with respect to age.

Age (years)	Depression		p-value
	Yes	No	
15-30	39(36.8%)	67(63.2%)	0.910
>30	8(38.1%)	13(61.9%)	
Total	47(37%)	80(63%)	

Table-V: Stratification of Depression with respect to marital status.

Marital status	Depression		p-value
	Yes	No	
Married	25(24.5%)	77(75.5%)	0.000
Unmarried	22(88%)	3(12%)	
Total	47(37%)	80(63%)	

Table-VI: Stratification of Depression with respect to duration of complaints.

Duration of Complaints (months)	Depression		p-value
	Yes	No	
1-6	15(18.3%)	67(81.7%)	0.000
>6	32(71.1%)	13(28.9%)	
Total	47(37%)	80(63%)	

DISCUSSION

Hirsutism is excessive terminal hair in androgen dependent areas in a female over face, chest, abdomen, upper thigh and areola.¹¹ It affects 5-10% of women in reproductive age.^{12,13} In our study, the mean age was 26.291 years which is similar to a study conducted by Baig et al. It means that people report to the doctor for hirsutism most commonly in young ages. 19.7% of patients in our study were unmarried which was lower than a study by Baig et al.¹⁴ in which it was 51.5%. Since 80.3% of the patients in our study reported being married, hirsutism may present more of a problem for married people than for single people in terms of how it affects their relationships with partners and in-laws as well as how confident they feel in general. As a result, they seek treatment from a dermatologist.

Hirsutism is sometimes more than just an aesthetic condition. It may be linked to serious underlying illnesses like hormonal imbalance or polycystic ovarian syndrome.¹⁵ We did not include people with chronic underlying disorders in our study, but more research is required to determine the frequency of hirsutism with specific medical conditions. In our study, the depression was seen in 37% patients of hirsutism which is almost comparable to a study by Lipton MG, et al. has shown that frequency of depression was 30% in women with hirsutism.¹⁰

Hodeeb et al discovered that women with severe Ferrimen-Gallway scores had greater levels of depression.¹⁶ Although we did not categorize our patients based on their Ferrimen-Gallway scores, studies that link depression to various degrees of hirsutism are welcomed in future and will help us determine if the degree of hirsutism is the actual problem or the patient's perception. According to the results of another

study conducted by Ekback et al, hirsute women experienced more anxiety than depression.¹⁷ Lipton et al.¹⁰ also found that hirsute women experienced anxiety more frequently than depression. There are different scales for assessing anxiety and depression and studies to determine if patients experience anxiety frequently or depression more frequently will be a beneficial thing to measure in the future.

Many women thought their facial hair was extreme, a finding that was more prominent among Asian and mixed-race women than white women. Yet, it was discovered that this perception didn't really affect how they were feeling psychologically. This is in line with earlier studies, particularly those that found that women's assessments of the severity of their own facial hair did not correlate with their degrees of depression when they were hirsute.^{18,19} Even a minor case of hirsutism, according to some research, can cause exaggerated self-consciousness and erode self-assurance.²⁰ According to Kiran KC et al.²¹ it is not the severity that results in anxiety, but patients' perception of the problem, as is the case with other dermatological conditions such as in psoriasis²² and acne.²³

Using an objective measure to assess the severity of hirsutism such as that developed by Ferriman and Gallwey²⁴ may have solved this issue and we will welcome further work in this regard. According to our study, depression increased as hirsutism duration increased. While 18.3% of patients initially experienced depression as a result of hirsutism in the first six months, 71.1% of patients reported experiencing depression as a result of hirsutism as its duration increased for more than six months.

CONCLUSION

We conclude from our study that depression was significantly seen in patients of hirsutism and also, patients suffering from hirsutism require psychotherapy and mental healing in addition to medications and treatments that can treat hirsutism.

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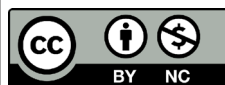
CONFLICT OF INTEREST
 Authors declare no conflict of interest.
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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

The following authors have made substantial contributions to the manuscript as under:

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All the authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.



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