



## **Vitiligo; Is Grace or Curse? A study on psychological wellbeing and self-esteem among vitiligo patients in India.**

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### **Abstract**

Vitiligo is one of the most common diseases, but it causes the colored spots on a human body to distinguish the patient from other medical conditions and lead to a derangement of the patient's mental state. Such a situation hinders the complete recovery of the patient and increases the power to aggravate the disease. The role of mental health in improving the quality of life of vitiligo patients is huge. This study attempt to examine, how a vitiligo patient's self-esteem and quality of life influence their disease progression and recovery.

**Key Words:** Vitiligo, Self-esteem, Psychological Well-being, Pigmentation, India

### **Introduction**

Physical appearance has a very important role in once life as in our society it comes first other than his or her capability and capacity. As physical appearance is also a yard stick of our society to measure a person from childhood itself people are conscious and aware about the maintenance of their appearance. Vitiligo is such a condition which affects badly to a person's appearance as like many other deformities in appearance. Vitiligo is a common skin disease. Appearance of white spots or patches appear on skin due to this disease which is because of destruction or weakening of the pigment cells of the affected areas, the result is destruction of pigment or may no longer produce. This will affect only the colour of the skin but the texture and other skin qualities remains normal.

### **Etiology**

Even though the exact reason for vitiligo is unknown according to doctors and many research this is due to the genetic predisposition or susceptibility to vitiligo exist among most of the people who develop vitiligo. Vitiligo may result from a number of factors –

1. Autoimmune
2. Oxidative stress (excess of hydrogen peroxide),
3. Neurotropic (interaction of melanocytes and the nervous system),
4. Toxics
5. Genetic susceptibility

### **Treatment and management for vitiligo**

The main goal of treating vitiligo is to improve the appearance of the skin. However, to date, no universally effective and safe therapy exists. Many treatment options have been developed but challenges persist, as not all patients respond to available therapies and relapse is common. Their effect varies greatly and complete re-pigmentation is rarely accomplished. The important modalities of vitiligo treatment; which may be used alone or in combination.

1. Self-Care
2. Phototherapy
3. Surgery
4. Topical Treatments
5. Counselling and Support

## **Methodology**

The research aimed to study the about the psychological well-being and self-esteem among vitiligo patients. The objective of the study was to know about socio-demographic profile of the patients, to understand the level of psychological well-being and to understand the level of self-esteem among vitiligo patients. Descriptive and diagnostic research design is used for the study. The study describes the socio demographic profile of the respondents and diagnoses the psychological well-being and self –esteem of vitiligo patients. The universe of the study is people affected with vitiligo and taking treatment at “EMS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL” PERINTHALMANNA, who included both male and female. Sampling technique adopted for the selection of the respondents was convenient method. 60 respondents were selected for the study. The tool of data collection for this study was interview schedule which includes personal profile of the respondents and the level of psychological well-being and self-esteem. (1) The Psychological General Well -being Rating Scale, it consists of five-point scale both positive and negative questions. (2) Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, it consists of four-point scale both positive and negative questions.

## **Results and Discussion**

**Table 1 - Level of psychological wellbeing**

Sl.no.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low Level	37	62
2	Moderate Level	14	23
3	High Level	09	15

The study shows that 23 % of respondents have Moderate level of psychological well-being, 15% comes under Good psychological well -being and 62% belong to Low level of Psychological well- being.

**Table – 2 – Level of Self-Esteem**

Sl.no.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low Level	33	55
2	Moderate Level	16	27
3	High Level	11	18

The above Table shows that, 27% of respondents have Moderate level of Self Esteem, 18 % comes under Good Self Esteem and 55 % belong to Low level of self Esteem.

The study helped the researcher to have a better understanding about the wellbeing and level of self-esteem of persons who are suffering from vitiligo. The problems due to vitiligo effects them throughout their life time. According to the present study the researcher understood the psychological and social problems facing the vitiligo patients. From this understanding researcher put forward some suggestions for improving their mental health and social well -being.

- Encouraging group work activities among vitiligo patients, it can helpful to ventilate their feelings.
- Social workers can ensure services by providing case work activities.
- Educating the patients about the nature and kind of treatments available.
- Encouraging recreational activities.
- Encouraging self- help groups, which can helpful for meet their financial and occupational needs.

## **Conclusion**

Due to the global perspective that pigmentation serves as a passport to society in many cultures, vitiligo is one of the psychologically painful conditions in dermatology. All vitiligo patients endure some level of emotional devastation brought on by the disease, despite the fact that darker skinned racial/ethnic groups tend to have the contrast of depigmented patches that are most noticeable. Physicians need to be more cognizant of how vitiligo affects psychological health and self-esteem. To provide the best possible care, doctors must be vigilant and aware of the mental health requirements of their patients who have vitiligo. The goal of interventions should be to dispel

illusions about vitiligo, such as the idea that it is a cosmetic condition, and to offer or provide the best repigmentation therapies.

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