

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Beliefs Perceptions and Knowledge among Alopecia Areata patients: A Cross-Sectional Study in the University of Lahore

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ABSTRACT

Background: Alopecia areata (AA) is a wide spread and chronic skin condition of unknown origin. It affects the patient's quality of life. This study was designed to assess the perception of the disease in patients with AA.

Aim: To determine the belief, perception and knowledge among alopecia areata patients visiting the university of Lahore teaching hospital.

Study design: Descriptive cross-sectional study.

Place and duration of study: Dermatology OPD, University of Lahore Teaching Hospital Lahore from September 2019 to February 2020.

Methodology: This was a description cross-sectional study from September 2019 to February, 2020 and carried out in Out-Patient Department of Dermatology at University of Lahore Teaching Hospital. The study included all the patients in the age range of 20 to 42 years of age with patchy alopecia. The duration of the study was six months, total participants were 67. A questionnaire was designed for the collection of data in the data base, such as age and gender, the onset of the disease, level of education, and is based on the knowledge, beliefs and behaviors regarding alopecia areata. The data was analyzed by using the version SPSS 25.

Results: Result shows that mean age of the participant's was 29.5±4. About 77.6 participants were married and 23.4 were unmarried. The 85.6% participants of study give yes response that alopecia areata affected the people result showed 38% considered it a serious health issue. The 76.1% participants of study give yes response that alopecia areata participants have serious financial problem. About causative factors, almost half (28%) of the participants believed that germs and viruses causes Alopecia Areata.

Keywords: Alopecia areata (AA), Knowledge, Perception, Belief.

INTRODUCTION

Alopecia areata (AA) is a common chronic skin disease of unknown etiology. This can have a significant impact on the patient's quality of life. This study was designed to assess the belief, perception in patients with AA. Alopecia areata (AA) is described as a pathological condition associated with unwanted, rather than predictable, hair loss.¹ This can affect any part of the body where hair grows. This is an autoimmune disease that is T-lymphocytes mediated, which can affect your hair follicles.² However, it is estimated that only 2% of the occurrence of AA in the Europe, and much less in the United States. There is no ethnic, gender, or professional factors involved.³ Alopecia areata (AA) is a sudden loss of hair, without inflammation or scarring. Hair loss can occur on a small area or on the entire scalp (alopecia totalis) or throughout the body (universal alopecia).⁴ This is a very common condition and at some point, or 0.2% of the AA population, and 1.7% of the population experiences an episode of AA in their lifetime.⁵ The etiology of AA is unknown. However, factors such as genetic predisposition, autoimmune diseases, and stress have been suggested. The course of the disease is unpredictable, and this is often associated with periods of hair loss and new growth.⁶ The clinical severity of AA patients is a good indicator of a further decline in quality of life and psychological well-being.⁷

This is a multi-factorial disease, in the etiology and development of which there are many environmental, immunological, psychological and genetic factors. In addition, it may be associated with other diseases. In an uncoordinated state, and each time individual patients develop a spectrum of clinical manifestations, partial hair loss from the head and other parts of the body, as well as complete hair loss on the entire body, can occur.⁸ This can happen at any age, but peak age group is between 20 and 30 years old. Although significant advances have been made in understanding the pathophysiology, management and treatment strategies, but lack of knowledge about disease and

patient behavior are major obstacles to successful treatment. One of the most important factors is stress and mental illness, which is the result of many socio-economic factors.⁹ Hairs affects a person's personality and social interaction. The disease of the young can lead to severe emotional stress.¹⁰ The fight against hair loss depends on the knowledge and perception of AA and this will lead to better adaptation. This study was conducted to assess the clinical features of consciousness, social and economic impacts, level of stigma and management practices of local AA patients.

The present study purpose is to determine the belief, perception and knowledge among alopecia areata patients visiting the university of Lahore teaching hospital.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This was a description cross-sectional study, from September 2019 to February, 2020 and carried out in Outpatient Department of Dermatology at University of Lahore Teaching Hospital. The study included all the patients in the age range of 20 to 42 years of age with a hair loss cure. The Illness Perception Questionnaire (IPQ) with a few modifications was given to 67 patients with AA older than 20 years, attending Dermatology Out-patient Department, University of Lahore Teaching Hospital. As AA is an asymptomatic disease, we did not use the subscale of "symptoms" in our study. Thus the questionnaire that we used consisted of four sub scales. The duration of the study was six months, total participants were 67. A questionnaire was designed for the collection of data in the data base, such as age and gender, the onset of the disease, level of education, and is based on the knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors regarding alopecia areata. The data was analyzed by using the version SPSS 25.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that mean age of the participant's was 29.5±4. The above figure showed that about 77.6 participants were married and 23.4 were unmarried. The 85.6% participants of study give yes response that alopecia areata affected the people see. Above figure represent that 38% considered it a serious health issue.

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About causative factors, almost half (28%) of the participants believed that germs and viruses cause Alopecia Areata. The 83.5% participants of study give yes response that alopecia areata affected the people see. Majority (88%) of the study sample experienced on effect social life. The 89.5% participants of study give no response that alopecia areata participant's that home remedies more effective than physician's prescriptions. Perceived stigma showed that anticipation of rejection was observed in 48 participants. The 76.1% participants of study give yes response that alopecia areata participants have serious financial problem.

Table 1: Age distribution of patients (n=67)

Total participants	67
Mean age (years)	29.5±4.3

Table 2: Emotional behavior is associated with Alopecia Areta

Which emotional behavior is associated with Alopecia Areata?	No.	%
Anxiety and Depression	58	85.6
Aggressive Behavior	9	15.4

Table 3: Does AA have serious financial problem

Does AA have serious financial problem	No.	%
No	51	76.1
Yes	17	24.9

Table 4: Alopecia areata affected way of people

Has AA affected the way people see	No.	%
Yes	56	83.5
No	11	17.3

Table 5: Home remedies more effective than physician's prescriptions

Are home remedies more effective than physician's prescriptions?	No.	%
No	60	89.5
Yes	7	24.9

DISCUSSION

Alopecia areata is chronic autoimmune disorder that can affect any hair bearing area. Due to disease natural course of remission and relapses it has impact on quality of life of patients. Our study which reflect patients knowledge beliefs, and behaviors during the treatment, as well as therapeutic monitoring is not usually formalized. However, there is a gap in the relevant information for the local population, and in the report, the University of Lahore, Pakistan. Marital status is also important for the A. A. is a factor. Our results are consistent with a recent study, according to which the impact of the AA, the quality of life was significantly associated with the married life. These results suggest that the greater the liability is also made for their mental health.¹¹ However, the recent study showed that married life not matters in alopecia areata. The results of this study confirm that the research carried out in the previous study elaborate that, the proportion of patients with a low level of education, due to inadvertence, stress, anxiety, which will lead to personal and social issues.¹² Alopecia Areata causes social disorders. To eliminate the effect on the social relationships and social support, which can lead to a change in the personality of the character this may be a first step in the psychological support.¹³

The stress of the events, also play an important role to play in encouraging some aspects of the AA, because of the stress mediates the release of stress hormones, reduce inflammation,

and it doesn't cause it directly, as previously reported in our previous studies. Show that, in this study, 85.6% of the participants reported that AA is the result of anxiety and depression.¹⁴

However, there is a major obstacle in the significant developments in the pathophysiology, management, and treatment of (AA), is the absence of the knowledge and understanding of the patient's behavior. One of the most important factors are: stress, psychiatric disorders, as a result of a number of socio-economic factors. The hair, the skin, the hair affects a person's personality, and social interaction. Because of that, young patient with disease it causes significant emotional distress.¹⁵ Psychological interventions in alopecia areata should focus on training general and alopecia areata specific coping competencies and regulating negative emotions at first onset of alopecia areata¹⁶

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that low literacy rate and lack of knowledge about AA can lead to improper treatment options and stress.

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