

Misconceptions of infection, contagion surround psoriasis

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(HealthDay)—Misconceptions of infection and contagion surround psoriasis, which is highly stigmatizing, according to a study published in the September issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*.

Jessica M. Donigan, M.D., from Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and colleagues used an image-based questionnaire to examine the attitudes and opinions of the lay public toward psoriasis and determine which factors contribute to its stigmatization. They also compared perceptions of psoriasis with those of other common dermatologic conditions. Fifty-six subjects completed questionnaires.

The researchers found that 48 percent of [participants](#) felt upset by the images of psoriasis, most often because of the color, scale, thickness, and size of the [lesions](#); significantly more participants were upset by images of herpes. Most participants (almost 61 percent) thought psoriasis had an infectious cause; 41 percent noted that the scale, color, and size of lesions made them look contagious. Most participants (85.7 percent) reported that they would feel pity if they saw someone with psoriasis, which was significantly greater than for other [skin conditions](#) apart from acne. Participants reported that [herpes](#) and psoriasis were the most bothersome (39.3 and 30.4 percent, respectively; $P = 0.42$). "Because of its potential lifelong impact, it is important to familiarize the public with psoriasis to aid in destigmatization," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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