



National Psoriasis Foundation
Webcast:
The Impact of Psoriasis
on Personal Relationships
August 18, 2010





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National Psoriasis Foundation

- The National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) is the largest charitable funder of psoriatic disease research and psoriasis patient advocacy organization worldwide
- Our mission is to *find a cure for psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis and to eliminate their devastating effects through research, advocacy and education.*
- We engage thousands of volunteers around the country in activities that will lead to a cure. Every voice counts.





Webcast Agenda

- Introduction
 - Nicora Gardner, MSW, Associate Director of Outreach, NPF
- Results of recent survey, “The Impact of Psoriasis on Personal Relationships”
 - Fran Cook-Bolden, M.D., Board Certified Dermatologist
- Tips on how to successfully manage relationships while living with psoriasis
 - Diana Kirschner, Ph.D, Relationship Expert
- Q&A
 - Dr. Cook-Bolden, Dr. Kirschner



Today's Speakers



Diana Kirschner, Ph.D

- Psychologist and relationship expert
- Author of best-selling book *Love in 90 Days*, basis for her one-woman PBS special *Finding Your Own True Love*
- Frequent guest on *The Today Show*, widely quoted in outlets such as *New York Times*, *USA Today* and *People*



Fran E. Cook-Bolden, M.D.

- Board-certified dermatologist practicing in NYC
- Director of the Skin Specialty Group and the Ethnic Skin Specialty Group
- Assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Columbia University
- Co-author of *Beautiful Skin of Color*



Survey Results

“The Impact of Psoriasis on Personal Relationships”

Dr. Fran Cook-Bolden



About the Relationship Survey

- Distributed to NPF membership database on July 7, 2010 via Survey Monkey, sponsored by Galderma
- Survey was completed by approx 1,520 people – **Thank you!**
- Statistics represent the percentage of people who answered a specific question (not always all 1,520 respondents)
- Statistics are rounded to nearest percentage point
- Percentages may not add up to 100% depending on structure of question
- Not every respondent answered every question.

Goal of survey was to gain insights on the perceptions of people with psoriasis and the impact of the disease on their personal relationships





Survey Demographics

- Of those of you that took the survey:
 - **98.2%** have been diagnosed with psoriasis by a doctor
 - **69%** diagnosed with **plaque** psoriasis
 - **41%** diagnosed with moderate psoriasis
 - **30%** diagnosed with severe psoriasis
 - **47%** are younger than 45 years old
 - **66%** are female
 - **51%** were diagnosed more than 15 years ago

All stats in presentation: Survey Monkey. "The Impact of Psoriasis on Personal Relationship". Accessed on July 23, 2010:
http://www.surveymonkey.com/MySurvey_Responses.aspx?sm=mFYIOxxTzuikKOnbo%2fqmOJv2GIw8jXAI0yFhagZBg4Y%3d





Have Your Relationships Been Impacted?

Yes!

- Nearly **80%** of respondents feel that psoriasis has had a **negative** impact on personal relationships
 - Of those, **more than half** (52%) noted their romantic relationships have suffered the most





How Psoriasis Impacts Your Social Relationships/Social Life

- **70%** of respondents think that psoriasis has impacted their social relationships
- **63%** are less-likely to go out socially but only 44% said they would change their plans at the last minute due to a flare-up.



Social Relationships (cont.)

- When meeting someone new, **72%** of respondents are concerned that people that notice their psoriasis will **think of them less favorably**
- For social occasions, **80%** of respondents usually wear outfits that cover up their psoriasis





Psoriasis and Dating

Nearly **80%** of single respondents feel that they date less than their peers because of their psoriasis. Why?

- Because I feel I am less physically attractive to the opposite sex (58%)
- Because I shy away from intimacy due to my psoriasis (52%)
- Because I am less outgoing when I am having flare-ups (41%)

And, **15%** feel that a relationship has ended because of their psoriasis





Psoriasis and Intimacy

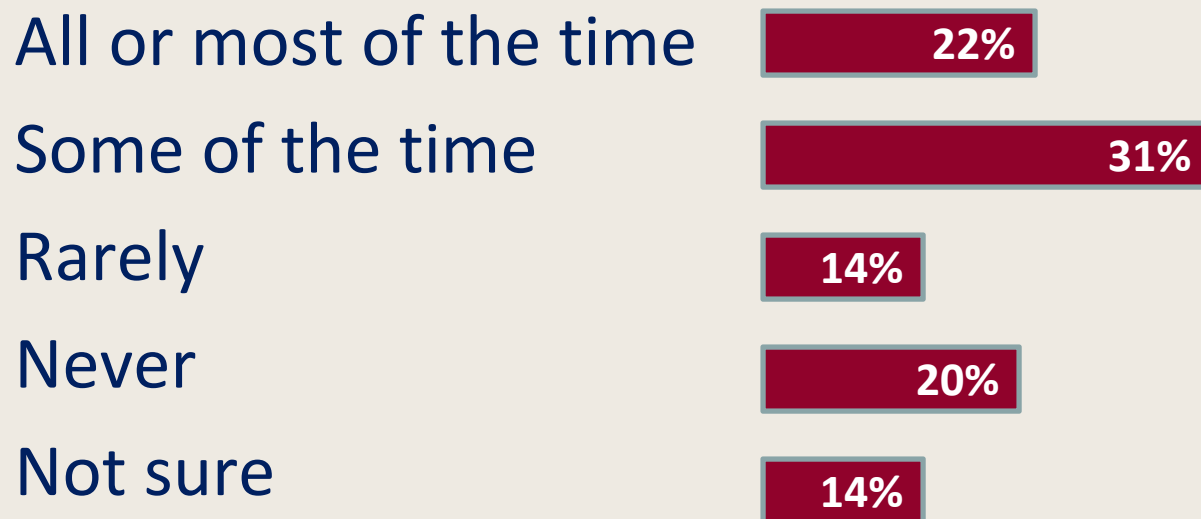
- Many respondents (**61%**) worry that their partner will be turned off from physical intimacy by their psoriasis
- **62%** feel uncomfortable exposing their body to their partner when having a flare-up
- **46%** do not feel “in the mood” when having a psoriasis flare-up





Psoriasis and Intimacy (cont.)

More than **50%** avoid physical intimacy because of psoriasis all, most or some of the time





Hiding Psoriasis

What do you do to distract people from noticing your psoriasis?

- Cover up with more clothes than necessary (67%)
- Stay in the background/remain quiet as much as I can (26%)
- Spend extra time trying to look my best (24%)
- Sit/stand in an unnatural position to hide flare-ups (22%)
- Wear more make-up than I normally would (14%)



Hypothetically...



If you didn't have psoriasis you would...

- Be more comfortable in a bathing suit (70%)
- Interact more with people (36%)
- Go out socially more often (35%)
- Have a more satisfying sex life (35%)
- Spend more time at the gym (29%)
- Have a better relationship with my partner (25%)
- Be more likely to date (23%)



Hypothetically (cont)...

Which would you give up for one year to be rid of psoriasis forever?

- Going on Facebook or other social networking site (62%)
- Going out to eat (50%)
- Shopping for new clothes/electronics (53%)
- Watching television (44%)
- Wearing make-up (39%)
- 15% wouldn't give up anything





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Successful Treatment Helps!

Nearly 60% of respondents whose psoriasis has been successfully treated said there has been a positive impact on their personal relationships



I am more confident when I meet new people (60%)

I am less concerned with what other people think of me (57%)

I participate in more social activities (46%)

I have more fulfilling relationships with family and/or friends (32%)





Seeking Treatment

- However, only 36% of respondents indicated that their psoriasis has been successfully treated....





Tips to Receiving Successful Psoriasis Treatment

- Keep **written documentation** of changes and improvements/worsenings in your psoriasis (note time of year, how long flare-ups lasted, etc.)
- If possible, **take photos of flare-ups** since by the time you see your doctor they may be improved
- **Psoriasis does not go away** and you still have the disease even if you are not experiencing flare-ups, so work with your physician on a management approach to treatment
- **Year-round compliance** with and long-term management of your treatment, even between flare-ups, is crucial to successful treatment





Tips to Receiving Successful Psoriasis Treatment

- When you see your doctor, be ready with questions written down, e.g.:
 - Is my current treatment still the right one?
 - What is the role of each of the treatments you're giving me?
 - Should I be using more than one treatment?
 - Is there anything I could do to manage my psoriasis?
- As always with physicians, honesty is the best policy – if you're not following your treatment plan, **'fess up** so that your doctor can help improve your psoriasis.





For more information and
patient resources please visit
ImAPeacemaker.com



>>> www.psoriasis.org

So What Can I Do to Strengthen My Relationships?

**Relationship Tips from Love Expert
Dr. Diana Kirschner**





The Impact of Psoriasis

- Psoriasis often causes more mental and emotional suffering than physical suffering
 - The *meaning* we associate with psoriasis can cause more conflict than the actual *condition*
- Separate the condition itself from what it means to you
 - “It makes me unattractive”
 - “It decreases my sex drive”
 - vs. It is a common, treatable immune condition that appears on the skin



Look Around You



- Take a look at your group of friends or a crowd at a restaurant next time you go out
- Chances are, you will see couples of all shapes and sizes, and lots of people with physical imperfections that are in rewarding relationships
- No one is perfect, and realizing this may help you feel more optimistic about your relationships

Practice Being Positive



- Mirror Exercise
 - Before a social gathering or date, take a long look in the mirror
 - Pick 3-5 things that you **like** about your physical appearance
 - Or, ask a friend or significant other to name 3-5 things **they** like
 - Shifts focus away from insecurities stemming from psoriasis and offers a quick confidence boost



Practice Being Positive (cont.)

- Every couple of days write out a neutral or positive statement about your psoriasis. Say it out loud (see below).
- Then write down and say a negative statement.
- Alternate negative and neutral statements until you feel a positive shift in your mood.
- This helps your brain get into the habit of countering negative thoughts with a positive response. For example:

“My psoriasis does not bother me.”

“I look ugly with psoriasis.”

“My psoriasis does not bother me.”

“I am not sexually appealing.”

“My psoriasis does not bother me.”

“I hate having psoriasis.”

“My psoriasis does not bother me.”





Pick the Right Time to Share

- When telling a new friend or romantic partner that you have psoriasis, keep a nonchalant tone and avoid injecting negativity
- If it doesn't seem like a big deal to you, it won't seem like a big deal to them
- Educate your sexual partner to clear up any misconceptions (psoriasis is not contagious, etc.)





Be Picky When Choosing a Partner

- Don't let your insecurities about your psoriasis allow you to settle for someone that you may not be happy with long-term
- Make sure a partner satisfies at least three key criteria:
 - He or she is crazy about YOU
 - He or she is willing to grow and improve
 - He or she meets the “basics” – is a good person, who shares your values/goals and has romantic chemistry with you





Be a Straight Shooter

- If you don't openly communicate your concerns about your psoriasis and how it makes you feel, he or she may begin to think that they have done something to make you pull away, causing misunderstandings that can lead to argument

Only SIX percent of respondents' partners have actually indicated that they want to avoid contact when their partner is having a flare-up!



Take Time to Listen



- Make it a point to let your partner discuss his or her thoughts uninterrupted for ten minutes every day, and then switch and share your feelings
- You might be surprised what you learn about how they really feel about your psoriasis (chances are, it's not as bad as you thought!)



If you continue to struggle with the emotional impact of psoriasis and it is affecting your emotional well-being, reach out to a psychologist who can counsel and encourage you.





Question and Answer with Fran Cook-Bolden, M.D. Diana Kirschner, Ph.D.

Questions not answered during this presentation can be sent to
education@psoriasis.org.





Thank you!
We hope you enjoyed today's presentation!

Thank you to our program sponsor:



For more information about managing your psoriasis, visit **ImAPeacemaker.com**

Learn more about the National Psoriasis Foundation and get involved by visiting

www.Psoriasis.org

