

Spanish survey on the importance of skin: perspective of physician and woman

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Objective: To assess the (subjective) incidence and impact of seborrhea (facial oiliness) on young women and to assess the awareness and relevance of this condition to health-care professionals. **Design & Methods** In a consumer survey conducted in March 2000 in Spain, 304 women (aged 15–20 years) were questioned about their skin. In addition, a group of twenty physicians (gynecologists) were interviewed about their perceptions of seborrhea in young women and their motivation to treat it.

Results: Two-thirds of the women classified their skin as being either type 2 (mixed/oily dry with occasional pimples) or type 3 (oily skin with regular pimples) (55% and 11% respectively). All of these women had some degree of seborrhea. Forty-three percent of these women were (fairly or very) annoyed about their greasy/oily skin. For treating spots or pimples, most of the women sought non-professional advice, whilst only 27% visited a health-care professional for this condition. Fifteen percent of all women indicated that they spent over 20 minutes per day on skin care. Thirty-eight percent of the women interviewed were (fairly or very) likely to consider using an OC with beneficial effects on the skin. In accordance with the women's survey, doctors indicated that they were rarely consulted about seborrhea and generally underestimated its prevalence in teenagers. Doctors regarded seborrhea as a physiological rather than a medical condition and only offered treatment when requested to do so or if the condition was severe.

Conclusions: Seborrhea is a common skin condition amongst young women, which has a negative effect on self-image. Although highly motivated to self-treat the skin-condition, women rarely seek advice from a health-care professional. Women are more willing than doctors to consider the use of OCs for treatment of this condition.