Despite recent therapeutic advancements for psoriatic disease (and more therapies on the horizon) psoriasis impacts the daily life of patients and is a substantial burden, data from the National Psoriasis Foundation (www.psoriasis.org) show. The data, culled from a 2005 survey by the Psoriasis Foundation and initially presented at the AAD meeting in March (P2833), is important for clinicians because it helps them understand how patients respond to different treatments and how psoriasis affects their quality of life. The Psoriasis Foundation conducts survey panels twice annually in efforts to highlight and understand areas of patients’ lives that have been affected most by their disease. “It is very important to document the burden of the disease because psoriasis impacts people for a number of reasons on various levels,” says Liz Horn, PhD, director of research for the Psoriasis Foundation.

Study Findings
According to Dr. Horn, what’s unique about this study is the population. Approximately two thirds of respondents have been diagnosed with psoriasis, while about one-third of respondents have been diagnosed with psoriatic arthritis. Also, approximately two-thirds of respondents have moderate (greater than three percent BSA) to severe psoriasis (greater than 10 percent BSA). “With some of our earlier studies, including our benchmark survey, about three quarters of the sample size had mild disease,” says Dr. Horn. “The importance of this study is that we are actually looking at a population that has mostly moderate to severe psoriasis.”

Responses show psoriasis clearly affects functioning. Almost half of respondents (48 percent) reported problems sleeping in the past month due to their disease, while about one-third of respondents reported problems using their hands (36 percent) and walking (31 percent) in the past month due to their disease. Regarding the effect of psoriasis and/or psoriatic arthritis on patients’ work lives, more than one-quarter (26 percent) of respondents with psoriasis reported that their disease negatively affects their jobs, while almost half (48 percent) of respondents with psoriatic arthritis reported a negative affect on their jobs.

Respondents were also asked to rate their disease as a problem in their everyday life on a scale of one to 10, one being not at all and 10 being very much. Nearly half of respondents reported their disease to be a large problem in their lives, which is consistent with other data from the study that show that many

New In Your Practice

Paralyzing Depression. Botox may help patients put on a happy face—but not how you think. According to a recent study in Dermatologic Surgery (2006; 32: 645-650), Botulinum toxin A can treat major depression. In the study, 10 patients with ongoing major depression received Botox to their glabellar frown lines. Two months after treatment, nine were no longer depressed, and the 10th patient had an improvement in mood.

Orphan Drug Status. The FDA recently approved orphan drug status for thymalfasin (Zadazin, SciClone Pharmaceuticals) in the treatment of stage 2b through stage 4 malignant melanoma. The decision was based on the results of an open-label, multicenter phase 2 trial that revealed that the addition of 3.2 mg of thymalfasin to dacarbazine chemotherapy is associated with a significant increase in overall tumor response compared with DTIC alone (12.9% vs. 3.9%).

Taken for Granted. Looking for funding for rosacea research? Contact the National Rosacea Society. The NRS is accepting applications for research grants. E-mail rosacea@aol.com or call (847) 382-8971 for details or applications.
New data support the role of TCIs in itch management. According to a recent study in Allergy (2006; 61: 375-381), pimecrolimus cream significantly reduces pruritus within 48 hours in patients with AD. Researchers examined the timing of pruritus relief in 198 patients with mild to moderate AD and moderate to severe pruritus treated with pimecrolimus cream 1%. Results indicated significant differences between the treatment groups as early as day two. Within 48 hours of treatment, 56 percent of patients treated with pimecrolimus and 34 percent of vehicle-treated patients were at least one point lower on the pruritus score, which was maintained or improved during the rest of the core study and the extension study.