



Dermatology: The Burden of Skin Disease

BACKGROUND:



A dermatologist is a licensed medical doctor and the only residency-trained physician fully educated in the science of cutaneous medicine, which includes the medical and surgical conditions of the skin, hair, nails, and mucous membranes. Dermatologists diagnose and treat more than 3,000 different diseases.

Dermatologists' post-medical school training and education consists of a one-year internship in internal medicine with a subsequent three-year residency program comprised of extensive training in medical dermatology and skin surgery. After residency, many dermatologists seek fellowship training in one of several sub-specialties, including procedural dermatology, Mohs surgery, dermatopathology, pediatric dermatology, aesthetic dermatology, and cutaneous oncology. Upon training and exam completion, dermatologists are board certified through the American Board of Dermatology, one of 24 medical specialty boards that make up the American Board of Medical Specialties.

Dermatologists in the United States practice in every type of medical practice setting. However, the vast majority of dermatologists are in solo practice or in small group practices consisting of 10 clinicians or fewer.

92 percent of dermatologists in the United States are members of the American Academy of Dermatology Association (Academy), the largest representative dermatology group in the United States. The Academy and its members are dedicated to promoting leadership in dermatology and excellence in patient care through education, research and advocacy. To better guide dermatology's position in the changing health care system, the Academy engaged in research to look at the effects of skin disease on patients in the United States, and to provide an up-to-date analysis of the burden of skin disease that reflects recent changes in the practice of medicine. The Academy's 2016 Burden of Skin Disease report was published in early 2017.



SERIOUS. (Skin disease is serious and can be deadly)

Dermatologists treat a wide array of conditions and provide essential, lifesaving care to patients.

- The American Academy of Dermatology's 2016 Burden of Skin Disease report analyzed 24 skin disease categories using data from 2013 medical claims.
- The scope of dermatology is far more than skin deep—common skin diseases such as eczema and psoriasis have been associated with other medical conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes.
 - Rosacea and Alzheimer's disease may share common disease processes.
 - There is a correlation between psoriasis, diabetes, and excess weight, perhaps due to a common genetic cause.
 - Patients with eczema are at heightened risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, asthma, food allergies, and hay fever.
- Half of skin disease categories analyzed were associated with mortality.
 - Life expectancy decreased by 5 years for those with fatal skin diseases.
- Skin cancers make up 60 percent of skin-related deaths; yet skin cancer is one of the most preventable skin diseases.



PREVALENT. (Skin disease is prevalent)

Prevalence of skin disease is high, and is likely to increase as the population ages.

- One in four Americans sought treatment for at least one skin disease in 2013; the average person was treated for 1.6 skin diseases.
- Nearly 50 percent of Americans over age 65 have skin disease, with an average of 2.2 skin diseases each.
- According to the Burden of Skin Disease report, there were more skin disease claims across the U.S. population in 2013 than cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or end stage renal disease.



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IMPACT. (Effects of skin disease are far-reaching)

Skin diseases present a significant burden on Americans, their families, and employers.

- Patients and caregivers with skin disease suffered \$11 billion in lost productivity. This does not include additional time with at-home care and treatments, which were not evaluated.
- \$75 billion was spent on skin disease in 2013. The majority of this was for treatment costs, including:
 - o \$46 billion for health care provider medical care;
 - o \$15 billion for prescription drugs; and
 - o \$10 billion for over-the-counter skin treatment products.
- Nearly 25 percent of the population ages 0-17 had a diagnosed skin disease, creating a burden on families.



TEAM. (We embrace a team-based approach to care)

Dermatologists are eager to be 'team players' with their fellow clinicians, coordinating with other disciplines to treat 'the whole patient.'

- Dermatologists are critical members of the health care team.
- Greater access to dermatology care is needed. An estimated 20,000 dermatology clinicians were needed to treat skin disease in 2013. There are only 10,000 board-certified dermatologists in the country.
- Two thirds of patients with skin diseases are treated by non-dermatologists, which can lead to disparities in the quality of care provided.
- Dermatologists are rapidly embracing innovative approaches to increase access to dermatologists' knowledge and professional expertise, including telemedicine, physician extenders, expanded hours, learning collaboratives, and more.
- When dermatologists work with other physicians—whether primary care physicians, pediatricians, or other specialists—benefits can include improved patient outcomes and lowered health care costs.
- In an era of team-based care and payments that reward collaboration, dermatologists recognize the importance of these partnerships with our physician colleagues.



PREVENTION. (More prevention research is needed)

Prevention and early detection are key to reducing morbidity and mortality rates from preventable skin diseases.

- More research to study the impact of screenings and public education on skin disease is necessary.
- Physician electronic health records (EHRs) must be interoperable with clinical data registries.
 - o Further data collection on outcomes by clinical data registries like the Academy's DataDerm are key to understanding how dermatologists' work alleviates the burden of skin disease for our patients.
- Exposure to ultraviolet radiation—from the sun and indoor tanning beds—is the most preventable risk factor for all skin cancers, including melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.
 - o Indoor tanning may cause upwards of 400,000 cases of skin cancer in the U.S. each year.