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***Prevalence of acne and its impact on the quality of life and practices  
regarding self-treatment among medical students in Palestine***

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## **Abstract**

### **Background**

Acne vulgaris is one of the most common skin diseases worldwide, causing great distress to patients. In addition, most acne patients suffer from low self-esteem and social withdrawal. This study aims to assess the prevalence of acne and its impact on the quality of life among medical students. It also evaluates the patterns of self-treatment use.

### **Methods**

The study population consists of all medical students at An-Najah National University and Hospital, including first-year students through 6<sup>th</sup>-year students. The questionnaire consists of three parts, and the first part consists of questions regarding demographic information. The second part consists of questions to measure the severity of acne using the acne severity scale as well as the Cardiff Disability Index, which assesses the quality of life regarding acne in medical students. The third part consists of questions exploring and assessing acne self-treatment.

### **Results**

The mean age of our study sample was 20-23(69.1%), with a female predominance of 72.3%. The majority of our study participants belonged to the clinical stage, i.e:4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> years. The prevalence of acne among medical students was 80.9, and 36.6% practiced self-medication. Acne was strongly associated with female gender ( $p < 0.001$ ) and skin type ( $p = 0.024$ ). As for diet, dairy consumption ( $p = 0.007$ ), sweets ( $p < 0.001$ ), chocolate ( $p < 0.001$ ), and oily food ( $p = 0.006$ ) were all significantly associated with acne. Skin type was strongly associated with acne severity ( $p < 0.001$ ) and Cardiff acne disability index ( $p = 0.016$ ). Gender ( $p = 0.039$ ) was also associated with Cardiff acne disability. Regarding self-treatment remedies, the most commonly used topical agent was antibiotics (70.3%). While the most commonly used oral agent was isotretinoin (9.4%). 22.7% of students used Herbal products, while 47.7% used home remedies.

### **Conclusions**

Acne is prevalent among medical students, with a high percentage of students having moderate or severe impairment in their daily lives. As a result, the practice of self-medication among acne sufferers is high. The use of topical antibiotics without prescription was high, and allopathy was the most common type of self-medication used by students.