



Skin appearance survey

More than half of those with skin conditions feel judged by others because of it, according to a new British Skin Foundation (BSF) survey. On top of that, a significant number of people with skin conditions say that it affects their mental health, everyday life and often leaves them feeling embarrassed.

The BSF believes that skin and hair are intrinsic to people's identity, with four in five agreeing that their appearance is important to their general wellbeing. Sadly, one in five are unhappy with their skin and appearance in general, while almost all the people surveyed saying they would welcome more research into skin disease.

Matthew Patey, chief executive officer at the British Skin Foundation, said:

"It's clear from the results of our latest survey that skin and appearance play a huge part in our mental health and happiness. Whilst the skin is the body's largest organ, most people underestimate its importance, dismissing skin issues as simply cosmetic. They wouldn't downplay disease concerning other organs in the body so easily. At the British Skin Foundation, we are working to find cures and treatments for all types of skin disease, including skin cancer. Our survey proves that the public are keen for more research into skin problems, which means we need your support today."

A link between the mind and skin has long been recognised. Professor Andrew Thompson, consultant clinical psychologist and British Skin Foundation spokesperson, said:

"We know from a multitude of studies conducted by myself and other researchers working in this area, that skin disease is associated with higher risk of experiencing psychological distress. Whilst there may be both complicated physiological and psychosocial reasons why skin conditions are linked to feelings of anxiety and depression, the good news is that psychological treatment can help and consequently it's important to seek help as soon as symptoms of depression or anxiety are noticed."

Dr Anjali Mahto, consultant dermatologist and British Skin Foundation spokesperson, agrees:

"Sadly, I don't find these statistics a shock or surprise as this data mirrors very much what many

Appearance and skin problems in British people

- **83% of people** believe that their appearance is important to their general wellbeing.
- **53% of those with skin disease** feel judged by others due to their skin condition.
- **20% are unhappy** with their skin.
- **18% are unhappy** with their appearance in general.
- **92% of people** surveyed would welcome more research into all types of skin disease, including skin cancer.

Of those with skin conditions now or previously:

- **35% say** that their skin condition affects their mental health.
- **26% agree** that they are often embarrassed by their skin condition.
- **25% said** that having a skin disease affects their everyday life.

of us see in clinic. We can no longer ignore the growing links between the skin and mind; skin conditions are not simply cosmetic or beauty issues and those who are suffering need to be taken seriously. No one should have to feel alone or suffer in silence. Please consider seeking help from your GP or dermatologist if your skin is impacting your ability to live your life on a daily basis."

About BSF: The British Skin Foundation has been funding skin research for 25 years to help find cures and treatments for a wide range of conditions. Increasingly, the psychological aspects of skin disease are rightly recognised for being just as important as the physical manifestations. To date they have raised more than £16 million to fund more than 400 research projects since 1996.

About the survey: This British Skin Foundation survey was undertaken in June 2021 and answered by 201 British people between 18-99 years old (102 male, 99 female).

Source:

The British Skin Foundation media release.