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SOCIAL WORK INITIATIVES FOR PROMOTIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH OF VITILIGO PATIENTS

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Abstract

Vitiligo is skin condition where patients' skin start losing colour and it start becoming white. Vitiligo has been described since ancient history. It is available all-around glob from 0.01% to around 8% globally. It is available to all age group people and to all gender people also. In many cases the treatment period for vitiligo is very long and many a time it reappears to the patients who had cured in the past. Due to all these and also being socially not accepted vitiligo patients mental health are not good. In Indian Society Vitiligo patients are still not accepted due to that vitiligo patients faces humiliation, stigma, discrimination, human right violation etc. in their daily life. These issues are having very negative impact on vitiligo patient's mental health. This paper is study of such issues face by vitiligo patients and the role of social work initiatives for promotion of mental health. Methodology: One to One Interview, informal Talks, Pre-define questionnaire is used Results: Vitiligo patients faces humiliation, stigma, discrimination, human right violation in their life. Social Work Initiatives helps to restore Mental Health of vitiligo patients. Conclusion: Counselling as part of social work initiatives needs to be added for vitiligo patients. There is need to spread awareness in the communities and society at large towards acceptance of vitiligo patients.

Keywords: Vitiligo Patients, Mental Health, social impact, human rights, Counselling

Introduction:

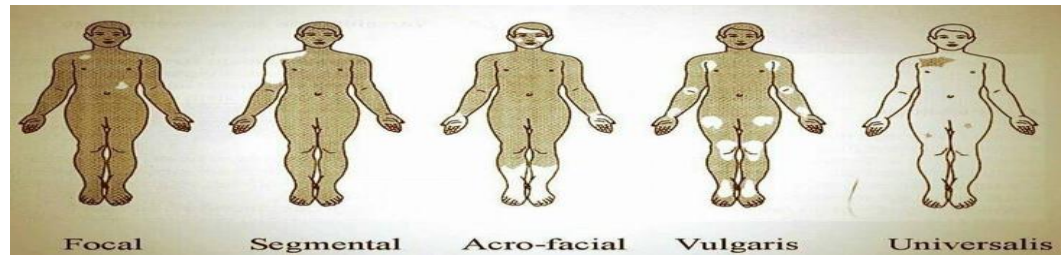
The Constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as "A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". It follows that the measurement of health and the effects of health care must include not only an indication of changes in the frequency and severity of diseases but also an estimation of wellbeing and this can be assessed by measuring the improvement in the quality of life related to health care. WHO defines Quality of Life as an individual's perception of their position in life in

the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, personal beliefs, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment. Good Health and Well Being is vital to saving human lives. As per Wikipedia “Vitiligo is a long-term skin condition characterized by patches of the skin losing their pigment. The patches of skin affected become white and usually have sharp margins. The hair from the skin may also become white. It is more noticeable in people with dark skin. Vitiligo may result in psychological stress and those affected may be stigmatized. Globally about 1% of people are affected by vitiligo. Some populations have rates as high as 2–3%. Males and females are equally affected. Vitiligo is having direct impact on Quality of Life of patient which effect the Mental Health of vitiligo patients. Mental health is key part for Well Being. Vitiligo is having it’s impact on Psychological, Social, Financial, Interpersonal Relations of Vitiligo Patients. Vitiligo is also known as leukoderma. Patients of vitiligo have more mental stress. They look at themselves They do not like to meet anyone. They go into deep depression. If they are properly encouraged by family and society, they get cured. This paper will try to find out impact of vitiligo on Mental Health and Well Being of Vitiligo Patients.

Definition of Vitiligo:

Vitiligo is a long-term skin condition characterized by patches of the skin losing their pigment. The patches of skin affected become white and usually have sharp margins. The hair from the skin may also become white. The inside of the mouth and nose may also be involved. Typically both sides of the body are affected. Often the patches begin on areas of skin that are exposed to the sun. It is more noticeable in people with dark skin. Vitiligo may result in psychological stress and those affected may be stigmatized. A condition in which the skin turns white due to the loss of pigment from the melanocytes, cells that produce the pigment melanin that gives the skin color. In vitiligo, the melanocytes are destroyed, leaving depigmented patches of skin. The hair that grows in areas affected by vitiligo may also turn white. The skin is not otherwise damaged. People with vitiligo must protect their skin from exposure to the sun. Also known as piebald skin and acquired leukoderma. A skin disorder manifested by smooth white spots on various parts of the body.

Types of Vitiligo:



Focal, Segmental, Acro-facial, Vulgaris, Universalis

Focal: Very few white patches/spots at few places on body, Segmental: At specific segment or part of body, Acro-facial: On body and face both and on both side of body, Vulgaris: Patches/spots are always seen on same place on both side of body and Universalis: Majority of the body is having white colour or by vitiligo patches

Causes for Vitiligo Impact:

There are many reasons for vitiligo impact. Below are the lists of few of them.

1. Chronic nature of disease is one of the major factors
2. Long term treatment also leads towards vitiligo impact
3. Lack of uniform & effective therapy and
4. Physical disturbance due to vitiligo
5. Social issues like stigma, discrimination, whispering
6. Physical and Social disturbance leads towards mental disturbance
7. Unpredictable course of disease are Usually very demoralizing for patients suffering from vitiligo
8. Zero acceptance at social and community level

Appearance of skin can condition an individual self-image, and any pathological alteration can have psychological consequences. We can divide the consequences or problems faced by vitiligo patients in the following major categories.

- Psychological consequences
- Social Consequences

- Financial Consequences
- Family and interpersonal relations of patient

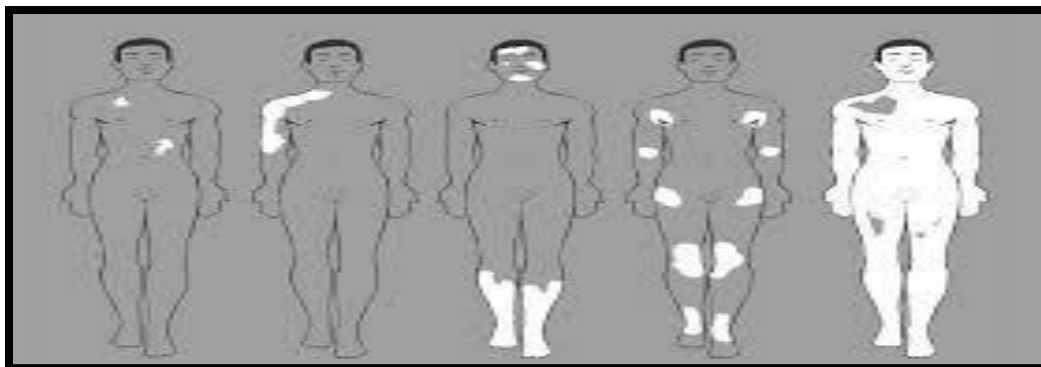
Wellness Triangle:



Wellness Triangle is made of 3 components:

1. Physical
2. Social
3. Mental/Emotional

1: Physically Disturbed Vitiligo Patients:



complete understanding is given to the respondents about the questions in the questioner. Understanding is given in Hindi, English and Gujarati language.

Inclusion Criteria

- All respondents are Adults and below age of 65 year
- Only Indian Citizens are included
- Equal number of female and male respondents are included
- Vitiligo patients with vitiligo on expose areas are included
- Acro-facial, Vulgaris & Universalis types of vitiligo patients are included

Exclusion Criteria

- Minor are not included in study
- Adult with age more than 65 year are not included
- Vitiligo due to chemical reactions and/or skin burning are not included in respondents
- Vitiligo patients with Focal and/or segmental conditions with hidden areas of body are not included
- Third gender or any other gender other than female and male are not included
- Previously stress conditions patients are not included

Results and Findings:

The study is carried with total 100 respondents out of which 50 respondents were female and 50 respondents were male. All the respondents had given response to all 10 questions. There is zero respondent with less than 7 score.

No	Total Score out of 500	Average	Mean of all respondents
Female Respondents	450	9	8.5
Male Respondents	400	8	

From Above table we are able to notice this the average score for all respondents is 8.5 out of 10. Average score for female respondents is 9 out of 10 and average score for male respondents is 8 out of 10. Average of 8.5 out of 10 very clearly indicate that majority of the respondents' mental health is disturbed due to vitiligo. Average score of Female respondents is 9 out of 10 shows

very high impact on mental health of vitiligo female patients. Result shows that the Average score of male respondents is 8 out of 10 shows very high impact on mental health of vitiligo male patients but it's little less compare to female. Compare to male respondents, female respondents are having high impact on their mental health. Finding reflect that vitiligo is having impact on physical, social and mental health of patients. All the above impact reflects on the Mental Health and Well Being of vitiligo patients

Patients reaction while dealing with Social Work Initiatives or intervention:

- Starting from Crying To No Crying
- From No Crying to Stress
- From Stress To No Stress
- From No Stress To comfortable
- From Comfortable to Relax
- Treatment starts giving results
- From Relax to Smile or confidence

Discussion:

Although the disease does not produce direct physical impairment, it may considerably influence the psychological well-being of the patients as well as it adds up social stress, together it hurts Quality of Life of Vitiligo patients. So, Vitiligo is an important skin disease having major impact on the quality of life of patients suffering from vitiligo. As per the study we are able to find out following few of the issues which needs to be discuss .

Indian Society is still not accepting vitiligo patients, what to do for that and how to bring awareness in Community, Society at large to accept vitiligo patients? It is also evident that how to deal with stigma, human right violation associated with vitiligo? and finally what to do, to prevent gender base discrimination face by female vitiligo patients?

Conclusion:

As per the study we can see that vitiligo is having impact on mental and well being of both vitiligo patients' female and male. With all the use of technologies, we consider our self modern but Indian Society is still not accepting vitiligo patients. Community, Society at large needs to be made aware to accept vitiligo patients. Female vitiligo patients are on more risk for discrimination and human rights violations. Our society needs to change our mind set and had to start accepting vitiligo as just a cosmetic disease only. As part of social work intervention counselling be added as part of treatment for vitiligo patients. Counselling can be added as part of treatment for vitiligo. More and more social awareness needs to be added to reduce stress and stigma associated with vitiligo. Female vitiligo patients need to be given more protection socially, legally to minimize the over stress impact of vitiligo

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