

The Psychosomatic Interface of Stress and Skin Disorders: Patient Experiences and Perceptions

Maximus Monaheng. Sefotho^{1,2}, Bylyre. Serjanaj³, Sheshachala. Karthik⁴, Seyed Amir. Saadati^{*5}

¹ Department of Educational Psychology, University of Johannesburg, Pretoria, South Africa

² Department of Psychology of Education in the College of Education (UNISA), University of South Africa, Auckland Park, Gauteng, South Africa

³ Department of Psychology-Pedagogy, University of Tirana, Albania

⁴ National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore, India.

⁵ Master of Clinical Science, School of Health Studies Department, Western University, Ontario, Canada

* Corresponding author email address: Ssaadat@uwo.ca

Editor

Safa Bulut^{id}
Department of Counseling
Psychology & Head of Student
Counseling Center, Ibn Haldun
University, Istanbul, Türkiye
sefabulut22@gmail.com

Reviewers

Reviewer 1: Fitim Uka^{id}
Department of Psychology, University of Prishtina, Prishtina, Kosovo.
Email: fitimuka@gmail.com
Reviewer 2: Mehdi Rostami^{id}
Department of Psychology and Counseling, KMAN Research Institute, Richmond
Hill, Ontario, Canada. mehdirostami@kmanresce.ca

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The manuscript would benefit from a clearer articulation of the theoretical framework guiding the study from the outset. Although the introduction briefly mentions the historical evolution of psychosomatic medicine, further elaboration on how this history and existing models of psychosomatic interplay specifically inform the study's approach would strengthen the foundation of the research.

The study's demographic diversity is commendable; however, more detailed information on the recruitment process and the criteria used for purposive sampling would enhance the transparency and replicability of the study. Additionally, considering the potential influence of cultural factors on the experience of stress and skin disorders, a brief discussion on the cultural background of participants and its possible effects on the findings could provide deeper insights.

The authors have diligently followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework for thematic analysis. However, the manuscript could be improved by providing more illustrative quotes from participants to support the identified themes and sub-

themes. This would not only enrich the narrative but also allow readers to engage more directly with the participants' experiences.

While the literature review is comprehensive, integrating more recent studies or meta-analyses could further contextualize the findings within current research. Specifically, discussing how this study's findings compare or contrast with recent quantitative research in psychodermatology could offer a more rounded view of the field.

The conclusion highlights the need for holistic treatment approaches, integrating psychological support with dermatological care. Expanding on practical recommendations for healthcare professionals, such as specific psychological interventions or models of integrated care, would make the study's implications more actionable.

The authors acknowledge the study's qualitative nature and sample size as limitations. Further elaboration on how these limitations might impact the findings' generalizability, as well as suggestions for future research to address these gaps, would be beneficial.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The study's introduction sets a broad historical context for psychosomatic medicine but falls short in directly linking these concepts to the research questions and methodology. A major revision should include a detailed theoretical framework that clearly outlines the psychosomatic theories or models that guided the research. This would not only strengthen the study's foundation but also help readers understand the specific psychosomatic lens through which the findings are interpreted.

While the manuscript outlines the thematic analysis process, there is a notable lack of detail regarding the analytical rigor and validation measures. Major revisions should include a more comprehensive description of the coding process, how themes were derived, and the steps taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. Including information on intercoder reliability or triangulation methods, if used, would greatly enhance the credibility of the analysis.

The manuscript briefly mentions the use of purposive sampling but does not provide sufficient detail on how participants were selected or the criteria used. Major revisions should elaborate on the sampling strategy, including how participants' experiences were deemed relevant to the study's focus. Additionally, a more thorough characterization of participants, including their cultural backgrounds and how these might influence their experiences of stress and skin disorders, is necessary.

The literature review provides a necessary backdrop but lacks critical engagement with existing research. A major revision should critically compare and contrast the study's findings with recent psychodermatology research. Highlighting areas of agreement and divergence would not only contextualize the study's contributions but also identify potential avenues for future research.

The discussion section should be substantially expanded to interpret the findings within the broader psychosomatic and dermatological literature. Major revisions should include a deeper analysis of how the themes identified relate to known psychosomatic mechanisms, potential implications for dermatological practice, and specific recommendations for integrating psychological and dermatological treatments.

The manuscript's acknowledgment of its limitations is too brief. A more detailed discussion of the implications of these limitations for the study's findings, including how they might affect the generalizability and applicability of the results, is necessary. Additionally, outlining specific directions for future research, particularly in terms of methodological diversity or the exploration of cultural factors, would strengthen the study's contribution to the field.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.