

ACNE VULGARIS: PREVALENCE, KNOWLEDGE,
BELIEF, AND PERCEPTIONS OF ACNE AMONG
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KOTA BHARU,
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ABSTRACT

Numerous studies have been done worldwide on prevalence of acne vulgaris and also the assessment of knowledge, beliefs and perceptions of acne among adolescents but comparatively few have been undertaken in Southeast Asia. Therefore, this study was designed to determine the prevalence of facial acne; to evaluate the knowledge and beliefs on acne and also to determine the impact on the quality of life among adolescents attending secondary schools in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. A cross-sectional study in 362 students (aged 13, 14 and 16 years) was conducted by using cluster random sampling from two secondary schools in Kelantan. Students with acne and non-acne problem were included in the study. A questionnaire was used to collect data regarding their knowledge, beliefs and perceptions about acne pathogenesis, treatment options, source of information and health-seeking behaviors; and a self-reported Cardiff Acne Disability Index (CADI) was used to assess the quality of life among adolescents. The students were examined for the presence of acne by using the Global Acne Grading System (GAGS). Acne prevalence was 85.4%. Out of these students, 79.1% were males and 91.7% were females. Most of the students believed acne is a part of the puberty and it is normal to have acne. 86.2% of the students agreed acne should be treated although majority of them did not believe acne is a disease. Most of the students believed not washing, repeatedly touching or squeezing spots and pollution could worsen the acne. Majority of the students with acne (87.4%) never consult a doctor although most of them need more information about acne. Most of the students prefer to ask their parents to get more information regarding acne. The mean CADI score was 4.4. This study demonstrated a weak correlation between acne severity and Cardiff Acne Disability Index. There was a significant difference in the CADI score between the genders and the quality of life was more impaired among girls. In conclusion, facial acne is very common disorder among adolescents, with a low psychological impact on the quality of life among acne sufferers. The general knowledge about acne among adolescents is low and false beliefs are widespread among the adolescents. Therefore, there is a need for more effort on health education in our secondary schools to ensure that adolescents receive appropriate information on acne and to encourage the patients with acne to adhere to the treatment.