

# PATIENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF BIOLOGIC THERAPIES FOR PSORIASIS IN FRANCE

Bruno Halioua\* <sup>1,2</sup>, Jean Zetlaoui<sup>3</sup>, Emilie Pain<sup>3</sup>, Lise Radoszycki<sup>3</sup>, Damien Testa<sup>3</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>RESOPSO, <sup>2</sup>Dermatologist, Paris 75005, France, <sup>3</sup>Carenity, Paris, France

**BACKGROUND:** Some patients with moderate to severe psoriasis do not respond or cannot be treated with conventional systemic drugs. The development of biological agents targeting tumor necrosis factor alpha (TNF $\alpha$ ), interleukin (IL)-17, IL-12 and IL-23 revolutionized the management of those patients. Yet, treatment dissatisfaction (1) and non-adherence (2) are common among patients with psoriasis. There is scarce data in France about patients' perceptions and experiences with biologic therapies for psoriasis.

**OBJECTIVES:** The objective of this study was to describe patients' perceptions and experiences with psoriasis in France, addressing communication with physicians, satisfaction with biologics and concerns regarding treatment options.

**METHODS:** A cross-sectional study was conducted through the French platform of Carenity, an online patient community. Patients registered in psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis communities were invited to participate in an online survey from January to June 2019. Patients receiving a biologic and follow-up by a physician were eligible to answer the questionnaire.

**RESULTS:** 37 patients (mean age 51 years, 65% were women) were included. Patients have had psoriasis for an average of 20 years. 65% are managed by a hospital dermatologist and 11% by a liberal dermatologist. 39% feel that the duration of their dermatological consultation is insufficient (100% for those managed by liberal dermatologist and 29% by hospital dermatologist).

Biologic treatment was started more than 2 years ago in 57% of cases. 81% feel that biologics reduce the extent of psoriasis and 76% that it stabilizes or prevents the spread of psoriasis. 81% say they follow their treatment rigorously. 54% consider that their current treatment should have been given earlier. 78% of patients with biologics feel they benefit from the most appropriate treatment for their psoriasis.

45% of patients who changed their doctors did it because they felt the doctors did not prescribe the best treatment and 34% because their opinion was not enough taken into account. After changing their doctors, 84% were prescribed a biologic by their new dermatologist.

Patients think their doctor introduced biologics because their disease was stabilized (51%) and because of their negative response to previous treatment (30%). Spouses played a part in modifying patients' treatments in 32% of cases, as well as their relatives (friends, colleagues, etc.) (22%), and their families (22%).

Table 1: Factors which motivate patients to change treatment

Several factors could encourage patients to change their biologic in case of uncontrolled psoriasis: n= 37	
1.	The discomfort related to psoriasis (89%)
2.	Assurance of the absence of serious adverse effects (86%)
3.	Important psychological suffering related to psoriasis (78%)
4.	Better listening to the doctor (73%)
5.	Therapeutic education program on psoriasis and new treatments (70%)
6.	The positive feedback from the experience of another patient (65%)
7.	The use of digital tools improving communication between the patient and the doctor (49%)
8.	More regular consultations (43%)
9.	Longer consultations (24%).

Table 2: Brakes which prevent patients from changing treatment

Brakes that would prevent patients from starting another biologic for unchecked or poorly controlled psoriasis are: n= 37	
1.	Not having enough perspective on the treatment (59%)
2.	Constraints of the new treatment (49%)
3.	The idea of taking a step further in worsening their illness (46%)
4.	Fear of not being able to take the new treatment (19%)

**DISCUSSION:** Our study confirms high satisfaction rates for biologics (3,4,5,6,7,8). Psoriatic patients often made the decision to change dermatologists because they felt doctors did not prescribe the best treatment and because their opinion was not taken into account. It is important to highlight the major role of the people close to patients with psoriasis (spouses, relatives and families) in the decision to change treatment. For the first time, our study reports the factors that would encourage or prevent patients from changing biologics.

**CONCLUSION:** Patients with psoriasis receiving biologics are very satisfied with their treatment. 44% of patients with biologics even consider that this treatment should have been given earlier.

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