

Perceptions of Muslim Patients of their Dermatology Care

Ghida EL Banna, MPP; Michelle Chang, BS; ELizabeth Bailey, MD; Nour Kibbi, MD

ABSTRACT

Background: Dermatology care for people of color is of growing interest, yet Muslim patients' religious and cultural needs have not been studied. This study explores the perceptions of Muslim patients of their dermatology care.

Methods: We conducted surveys and semi-structured interviews with Muslim patients who received dermatology care at Stanford. Questions explored the impact of religious and cultural practices on dermatology care. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and coded in Dedoose. We used inductive and deductive thematic analysis.

Results: 14 patients participated in the study: three males and 11 females (four wore hijab); seven Middle Eastern, one North African, and six South Asian, aged 25-71 years. The rise of Islamophobia and fear of discrimination negatively impacted the Muslim patient-dermatologist trust relationship. Participants felt that the Muslim community has poor access to dermatology care because of the rising cost of dermatology care, lack of prioritization of dermatology care (not seen as emergency care), and stigmatization of cosmetic care. The burden of skin disease also impacted participants' ability to observe worship (e.g. kneeling during prayers, wearing Kufi to the mosque). Additionally, participants shared religious and cultural needs unique to Muslim patients. Those include preference for same-gender providers, medication adjustment during Ramadan, and verification of Halal medication ingredients.

Conclusion: This is the first study to highlight the diverse needs of Muslim patients in dermatology. It also emphasizes the importance of skin-of-color education, cultural humility training, cost-conscious care, and greater diversity in the dermatology workforce.

Funding provided by Stanford Precision Health for Ethnic & Racial Equity and Valley Fellowship Foundation Program