



# HS FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Helping you understand the impacts of HS on your patients

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## WHAT IS HS?

Hidradenitis Suppurativa (HS) is a debilitating, chronic, complex inflammatory illness, also referred to as an immune-mediated inflammatory illness and follicular occlusion.

It has a huge impact on the quality of life physically, mentally, and emotionally. HS consists of extremely painful recurring abscesses that can develop anywhere hair follicles are found. It is possible to experience abscesses or lesions anywhere on our body with the exception of the palms of your hands, soles of your feet, and lips.

HS is not contagious. There are three Hurley stages used to determine severity. There is no cure and treatment options are limited.

## ANXIETY & DEPRESSION

Studies show that there is a higher prevalence of anxiety and depression in those with HS. There is a sense of isolation that comes with feeling as though you are alone in your condition and not wanting to share with others because of the odor, drainage, pain an embarrassment as a result of this condition.

## SHAME

There is a lot of shame with HS. It effects the most intimate parts of our body. The shame also comes from the constant drainage (usually accompanied by odor), pain, unpredictability and inability to participate in activities of daily living.

## FINANCIAL BURDEN

HS is an expensive disease. Most of the supplies that we use for our condition are not covered or have to be purchased out of pocket such as gauze, bandages, wound care supplies, drawing salves, etc. This doesn't include any of the products that others have purchased and had success with, which we will also most likely purchase. There are times that we are unable to work due to the excruciating pain involved, which has negative impacts on our financial wellbeing.

## PHYSICAL IMPACTS

HS is unpredictable. An abscess can appear at any time and can also disappear just as quickly. Abscesses can be extremely painful. Once they rupture the pain can abate immediately or sometimes they continue to be painful; each abscess is different. These flares can impact our ability to use our arms, walk, sit, bend, and impede on any activity of daily living. For many it impacts our ability to work or exercise.

## INTIMACY

The ability to maintain normal intimate relationships with HS can be very challenging. It creates issues for us with self esteem which impact our feelings about sex and intimacy. The fear of odor, drainage and potential pain involved with HS and sexual relationships plays a large role in our desire, drive and positive feelings about ourselves.

## PAIN

Pain is a major part of HS, no matter what stage. Abscesses can present any time, without warning. HS is one of the top 3 most painful skin conditions. Most of us are not offered any pain cessation medications of any kind as "it's just a skin condition". Our pain goes underreported and is something that again makes us not feel heard with our condition.

### MISTRUTHS ABOUT HS

- Patients don't have HS because they're overweight or uncleanly.
- HS is not a rare condition, an STD, or an autoimmune disease.
- HS can affect ANYONE, males, females, children, teens, during or after menopause and ANYWHERE on our bodies where there are hair follicles.



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