

FACT vs FICTION

Hidradenitis Suppurativa (HS) Truths

This resource equips providers with patient-appropriate information to dispel common myths about HS. A better understanding of their disease can help empower your patients.

MYTH

Patients with HS cause their disease.

FACT

Patients with HS are not to blame for their disease. The cause of HS is unclear and likely has many factors. HS can be made worse by a number of factors including microbiome, genetics, and lifestyle.^{1,2}

MYTH

HS is a contagious disease.

FACT

HS is not contagious and cannot be spread from one person to another. It is believed to be caused by increased inflammation.¹

MYTH

HS is caused by a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

FACT

HS is not an STD and is not caused by any type of infection. HS lesions often develop around the genitals and anus because these areas contain sweat glands.¹

MYTH

HS is a rare disease.

FACT

Although HS is often underrecognized and underdiagnosed⁴, it is not a rare disease. It affects between 0.1-1% of the US population, up to an estimated 3,200,000 patients.⁵

MYTH

HS is caused by poor hygiene.

FACT

While the cause of HS is unknown, it can develop through increased inflammation and may start with a reaction to a plugged hair follicle.³

MYTH

HS only affects women and people who are overweight.

FACT

While people of any gender, race, and body type can be affected by HS, the disease carries a higher risk of impacting those who are young adults, female, African American, or overweight.³

MYTH

HS only affects the skin.

FACT

HS is believed to be related to the immune system. As such, it can also affect the lymph nodes, muscles, joints, and bones.⁶

People with HS often have other conditions including cardiovascular disease, irritable bowel disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and spondyloarthritis.^{1,7}

MYTH

There are no treatment options for HS.

FACT

While there is no cure for HS, a variety of treatments are available. Medicines can include topicals, oral medications, and injectable biologics⁸

MYTH

All cases of HS are the same.

FACT

HS affects everyone differently.

In addition to presentation of the disease, the severity of the condition can vary significantly from person to person.¹

MYTH

HS only affects patients physically.

FACT

Depression and anxiety are common in patients with HS. Part of this is because people who struggle with HS may feel embarrassed to talk about their condition and feel isolated. Numerous resources are available to address the psychosocial complications of HS including support groups, medication, and counseling.⁵

References

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