Patients with skin diseases experience a wide range of symptoms ranging from trivial problems to major handicaps which affect their lives.

Key insights
Since atopic dermatitis is one of the most common chronic relapsing childhood dermatoses, it has major social and financial implications for individuals, health-care providers, and society as a whole. Despite the prevalence of atopic dermatitis, relatively little attention has been given to the impact of treatment on quality of life. The assessment of disease-related quality of life is important because it complements the traditional clinical scoring systems and captures the effects of the disease on patients and their families.

Current knowledge
Atopic dermatitis has a large impact on quality of life, regardless of the age of the patient. Patients with the disease have inferior scores not only on symptoms, but also on social functioning and mental health. The severity of pediatric atopic dermatitis also has a significant negative impact on the physical and mental health of the families of these infants, particularly the mothers. If properly managed, the disease symptoms can be kept under control and patients are able to lead normal lives.

Practical implications
Health-related quality of life assessments not only evaluate qualities directly related to the disease, but also those that are indirectly related to the disease but that may be affected by it. The latter are often neglected by disease severity indexes. It is important to note that the instruments designed to measure quality of life usually assess patients’ current experiences and are not designed to assess the long-term impact of disease, which may change over time. Treating physicians should include a quality of life assessment as part of the treatment and follow-up for children with atopic dermatitis.

Recommended reading