

# Understanding the Impact of Genital Hyperpigmentation on the Quality of Life Among Moroccan Women

## Introduction

Female genital hyperpigmentation is a common concern, particularly in regions with darker phototypes like Morocco. Influenced by societal beauty standards, this condition can significantly affect a woman's quality of life. Despite its prevalence, genital hyperpigmentation remains under-discussed, leading many women to suffer in silence. This study aims to evaluate the impact of genital hyperpigmentation on the quality of life in Moroccan women using the Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI). It examines how factors such as age, phototype, pigmentation location, partner remarks, and media representations shape women's expectations and experiences. To our knowledge, this is the first study to explore these aspects of genital hyperpigmentation and its effect on quality of life.

## Materials and Methods

A total of 170 participants were surveyed using an anonymous questionnaire that gathered data on age, marital status, location and color of genital pigmentation, partner remarks, interest in genital whitening, and external influences. The Validated Moroccan dialect version of DLQI index was used to assess the impact of genital hyperpigmentation on quality of life. Data were organized in Excel and analyzed using Jamovi.

## Results

The participants' average age was 29.2 years, with a range from 17 to 62 years. The predominant phototypes were III (48.2%) and II (37.6%). Regarding marital status, 37.1% were single, 36.5% were married, and the rest were in a relationship. A total of 87.1% of participants reported noticing genital pigmentation, with 21.8% receiving remarks from their partners, 43.2% of which were negative. The average DLQI score was 3.98, indicating a mild impact on quality of life, with extremes ranging from 0 to 19.

A significant inverse relationship was found between age and DLQI score ( $p = 0.021$ ), with younger women experiencing a greater impact on their quality of life. The location of pigmentation, particularly at the thigh roots, was most strongly associated with a reduced quality of life ( $p < 0.001$ ). Pigmentation at the labia majora also had a notable impact ( $p < 0.030$ ). Partner remarks were significantly correlated with a decline in quality of life ( $p < 0.01$ ).

A proportion of 43.7% of participants expressed interest in genital whitening. Among those interested, 47.2% cited personal reasons, 34.4% were influenced by media portrayals, and 11.4% reported external pressure from their partner.

The results indicate that genital hyperpigmentation mildly impacts the quality of life in Moroccan women, especially younger women and in more visible areas like the thigh roots. Negative partner remarks and media influence further exacerbate this distress, highlighting the need for a holistic approach.

## Conclusion

Dermatologists are often the first to address concerns related to genital hyperpigmentation, a subject that has long been taboo, often experienced in shame and silence. While our study revealed an overall mild impact on quality of life, it also highlighted that, at the extreme,

some patients experienced greater impact. It is crucial for dermatologists to handle these situations with sensitivity and offer appropriate treatment options when necessary to improve patients' well-being.