

# PSORIASIS

## Journey to Stability

### Impact of Psoriasis on Patients

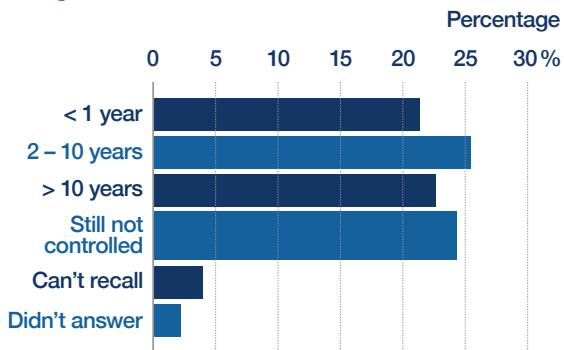
Most cases of psoriasis can eventually be managed, and most people who have psoriasis can live normal lives. However, some people who have psoriasis are so self-conscious and embarrassed about their appearance that they become depressed and withdrawn. The emotional impact of psoriasis on a person's life does not necessarily depend on the severity of the lesions. It is determined by how each person feels about the itchiness, pain and discomfort of psoriasis and the visibility of the lesions.

### The Journey to Stability

Stability was defined as an individual's personal comfort with the effectiveness of treatment, the degree of skin clearance, and quality of life.

In Canada, the journey to stability is often onerous and usually involves failing on several different medications before finding one that is effective. A considerable number of people surveyed have lived for 10+ years with unstable psoriasis before finding a medication or treatment that managed their psoriasis.

#### Length of Time to Stable



#### How well the respondents' psoriasis is currently managed



Treatment decisions are often difficult and emotional. When respondents changed medications because they weren't effective, the majority (65.32%) were negatively impacted.

Biologics and biosimilars are a newer class of treatments that have been available to Canadian psoriasis patients for over 10 years. Knowledge of biologics and biosimilars was low among the people living with psoriasis surveyed, with the majority of respondents classifying themselves as knowing very little or only having some knowledge of this class of medications.

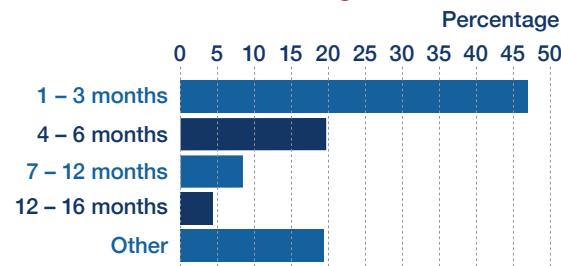
Without education and without informed decision-making with their treating clinician, people who are stable after a lengthy and emotional journey reacted strongly to the possibility of being switched to another medication for non-medical reasons.

The majority of respondents living with psoriasis have been seen by a dermatologist. Some, but not many, had been seeing a dermatologist regularly for years.

For those who had not seen a dermatologist and gave a reason why, most indicated it was either due to the fact that their family physician would not refer, they were currently waiting for their appointment, or there wasn't a dermatologist in their community. For those people who responded using "other", the general theme was a lack of specialists within a reasonable distance. Another underlying theme was that the wait time to see a dermatologist can be lengthy.

UV Light Therapy, which works for many psoriasis patients, is only available in a limited number of large hospitals in urban centres. Unfortunately, its public coverage is shrinking across Canada.

#### Wait Times to See a Dermatologist



### How You Can Help

- Talk about the pros and cons of different treatment options. Connect people living with psoriasis with support, including organizations like ours.
- Monitor patients living with psoriatic diseases for the development of co-morbid, chronic conditions.
- Work with your patients to best support their full range of needs — physical, mental, and emotional — including referring them to other healthcare professionals as needed.
- Encourage your professional association to advocate for greater access to dermatologists and UV Light Therapy for people living with psoriatic diseases.

### Methods & Limitations

The Journey to Stability Survey was open from September 15 to November 8, 2017. Online surveys were completed by 286 English respondents, with the majority (96.5%) being adults living with psoriasis. The survey findings only represent the experiences of Canadians who responded. There was no accompanying educational material provided to respondents, so any limitations in their own knowledge (e.g., about new treatments like biologics or biosimilars) were not addressed. In addition, sample bias is possible as people dealing with issues related to their psoriasis may be more apt to respond to such a survey rather than people who have achieved greater control over their condition.