

# IRIS: methodological assessment of psychopathological disease in a cohort of hirsute women.

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[G Ital Dermatol Venereol](#). 2014 Nov 4. [Epub ahead of print]

## Abstract

Hirsutism in females can be a source of considerable psychological distress and a threat to female identity. The aim of our study was to evaluate a possible relationship between facial, total body hair involvement and physical, mental and social well-being during 12 months of follow-up and treatment. Both objective and subjective methods of evaluating hirsutism were used: the Ferriman-Gallwey scoring method and the questionnaires GHQ-12, PCOSQ and SF-12. The total of 469 female patients (mean age  $27.61 \pm 7.63$  years) was enrolled in 27 Italian centres participating in this study. Higher total body score was correlated to significant emotional discomfort. The correlation between the FG total body score, the facial score and physical/mental health was found to be significant in all the patients assessed by SF-12 questionnaire. The ongoing reduction of GHQ-12 score was found for the facial FG score at the first follow-up (T0-T1 period) and at the second one (T0-T2). No relationship was found between T1 and T2. At both six (T1) and twelve months (T2) follow-up an increase of PCOSQ score (psychological improvement) was accompanied by a concomitant reduction of the FG score (reduction of hirsutism). Physical health assessed by SF-12 questionnaire does not change at both six and twelve months' follow-up, but mental health decreased at both T1 and T2. The clinical improvement was achieved at six months regardless on treatment used and it was maintained for the next six-month's follow-up. The clinical outcome could be assessed both by Ferriman-Gallwey score both through questionnaires administered to each patient with hirsutism. For the evaluation of psychopathological discomfort the most appropriate questionnaire was GHQ-12, because of its major sensitivity to identify the psychological discomfort in the hirsutism.