

HEALTH REPORT

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ACNE 'SCARS' AUSSIE TEENS

National survey figures released today reveal that Australian teenagers are suffering from ridicule, insult and blame due to acne – a skin condition which will affect 85 per cent of teenagers and young adults at some time during their life.

A shock finding from this month's Pfizer Australia Health Report is that 70 percent of teens feel they are being blamed by society for their condition.

A further one-in-three teens has been ridiculed or insulted because of their condition on at least one occasion.

Despite this, most Australians surveyed feel they treat others with acne the same way as people who do not have acne.

The national research was conducted by the Skin and Cancer Foundation Australia and researched-based medicines company, Pfizer Australia.

The Pfizer Australia research reveals a link between acne, social isolation and depression.

A total of 40 percent of respondents say acne makes them feel unhappy or depressed or 'less social', while a further 30 percent avoid social activity because of acne.

Dr Paver, dermatologist and Medical Director of the Skin and Cancer Foundation Australia, says acne is distressing enough without having to endure psychological torment from peers.

"These results aren't surprising considering the enormous impact that acne can have on your physical appearance, including pimples, blackheads, whiteheads and even large cysts and painful swellings," said Dr Paver.

Despite the social agony surrounding acne, the survey shows that one-in-five acne sufferers has avoided taking vital medication due to reported side effects, such as depression.

"Acne can be extremely upsetting as the break-outs usually occur on the face during teenage years when extreme pressure is being placed on looks and appearance.



"Many myths surround the causes of acne, ranging from poor eating habits to bad hygiene, but the reality is that acne is a medical condition that develops due to a disorder of the function of the grease glands in the skin," said Dr Paver.

The Skin and Cancer Foundation Australia says this research demonstrates the need for further community education on the immense benefits of acne medication.

"There is no guaranteed cure for acne, however there are many available therapies which can help control acne quite successfully, and consequently take the sting out of socialising.

"The irony is that untreated, some individuals may continue to suffer immense psychological scars for many decades," said Dr Paver.

To assist with educating the public about acne, the Skin and Cancer Foundation Australia has collaborated with Pfizer Australia to produce this month's edition of the Pfizer Australia Health Report. Filled with useful information, free copies can be requested by phoning **1800 675 229** or by visiting www.healthreport.com.au where people can also sign-up for email alerts of future editions.

The findings on Australian perceptions of acne are based on responses from 1,517 Australians aged 12 years and over. A sub-set of teenagers aged 10 to 20 were asked about their experience with acne. The research was conducted in August 2005 by independent consultants Stollznow Research.

Pfizer Australia is the nation's leading research-based health care company, investing over \$A42m in local research and development annually. It discovers, develops, manufactures and markets innovative medical treatments for both humans and animals. For more information, visit www.pfizer.com.au.

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NB: INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL SPOKESPEOPLE ARE ALSO AVAILABLE IN EACH STATE/TERRITORY.

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