

themselves (84.7%, 111/131), other (3.81%, 5/131), and from friends/family (2.29%, 3/131). However, 66.6% (94/141) of participants indicated that they were most likely to follow advice made by a physician, rather than an online source or other. However, only 43.2% (61/141) of patients with HS would recommend their physician.

These findings illustrate the need for providers highly skilled in treating HS. Many patients are seeking answers and making decisions based on information they find online, but there is minimal direct input from physicians. This is an opportunity to use online forums to determine what information patients are seeking and determine a way to provide them with accurate sources of information, such through as the HS Foundation. Our conclusions are limited by selection bias because our survey was posted on Reddit and Facebook, which may exclude users of other online platforms and those without access to the Internet.

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Animal product in suture material: A survey study of dermatology patient perspectives



To the Editor: Sutures used in dermatologic surgery commonly contain animal product, but the nature of the suture material is rarely discussed with patients preoperatively. This may present an ethical concern for patients who object to the use of animal products according to beliefs or dietary preferences (ie, vegetarian/vegan). To our knowledge, no study has explored dermatologic patient beliefs on animal-derived sutures, including whether disclosure of this information could alter patient preferences.

To determine whether information in regard to suture material should be included in our pre-procedural consent process, we created a short, nonvalidated survey to assess preferences and dietary habits. We hypothesized that dermatology patients would prefer to be informed about the use of animal-derived suture material or might object strongly enough to opt for alternative material. Additionally, we hypothesized that the proportion of patients objecting to suture material containing animal product would be significantly higher in the vegetarian/vegan population compared with that in the general population.

Adult participants were recruited in the waiting room before their appointments at UConn Health Dermatology during July 2019. One hundred thirty-six patients were invited to participate, and 102 patients agreed to complete the survey (75% response rate). Most participants were aged 18-25 years (n = 17; 16.8%), 56-60 years (n = 13; 12.9%), or older than 65 years (n = 25; 24.8%) and were women (n = 63; 62.4%). A high portion of participants reported having received stitches either at our facility or elsewhere (n = 80/101; 79%). Additionally, most patients reported that they would want to know whether animal products were being placed in their skin (n = 75/101; 74%). Furthermore, a substantial portion of patients reported that use of animal product in their stitches would affect their treatment preferences (n = 38/96; 40%). One-third of patients (n = 32/96; 33%) reported that they would decline the use of animal-based material used in stitches (n = 32/96; 33%), and 47% of these patients reported they would decline even if it meant they would have to come back for another visit to remove the stitches (n = 31/66; 47%). Responses to these 4 questions in regard to suture material were not statistically different between vegetarians and nonvegetarians (Fisher's exact test $P = .21-.68$) (Table 1).

Table I. Participant responses to animal-based sutures by dietary preferences

Questions		Nonvegetarian, no. (%)	Vegetarian, no. (%)	P value*
Would you want to know whether animal products are being placed in your skin?	Yes	67 (74.4)	6 (85.7)	.68
	No	23 (25.6)	1 (14.3)	
Would it affect your decision of which stitches to use knowing it is an animal-based product?	Yes	32 (37.6)	4 (57.1)	.43
	No	53 (62.4)	3 (42.9)	
Would you decline the use of animal-based material used in stitches?	Yes	26 (30.6)	4 (57.1)	.21
	No	59 (69.4)	3 (42.9)	
If you answered yes to "Would you want to know whether animal products are being placed in your skin?" would you decline even if it meant you would have to come back for another visit to remove the stitches?	Yes	27 (45.8)	3 (60.0)	.66
	No	32 (54.2)	2 (40.0)	

*Fisher's exact test was used because cell counts were less than 5.

Our study is limited by its single-center nature, but our results indicate a substantial proportion of dermatologic patients want to be informed about animal product in their sutures, regardless of dietary preferences. Therefore, it can be argued that patients should be informed if animal product is going to be used and given the option of an alternative suture type. This issue has only recently been explored in medical and surgical fields,¹⁻³ including dermatology.⁴ With an increasingly diverse patient population, it is imperative for dermatologists to be considerate of each patient's perspective and to recognize the potential effect of personal beliefs on treatment choices. Patients may also prefer to be informed about the nonbiodegradable nature of plastic sutures (ie, polypropylene) and the associated environmental effect.⁵ Informing patients of the nature of sutures during informed consent may promote more socially, culturally, and environmentally appropriate medical care and strengthen the patient-physician relationship.

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Public misperceptions of common sunscreen labeling claims: A survey study from the Minnesota State Fair



To the Editor: Despite deliberate education efforts by the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) and previous regulations set forth by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to standardize sunscreen labeling practices,¹ preliminary studies have demonstrated basic sunscreen labeling to be poorly understood by the general public.^{2,3} In addition, a multitude of supplementary features are marketed by sunscreen companies, many of which are not FDA regulated and may create further confusion in sunscreen purchasing.⁴

This study aimed to build on previous research identifying gaps in sunscreen knowledge to clarify potential misperceptions regarding sunscreen labeling claims. Furthermore, given the FDA's proposed rule to further clarify sunscreen labeling as part of the 2019 Sunscreen Innovation Act,⁵ this project sought to help effect this change.