

Project Contego

7-26

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Project Contego - Written Report

Section 1: Overview

A. Area of Concern

Psoriasis is a common skin disease that affects an estimated 40 000 people in Singapore (National Skin Centre). Psoriasis is a skin disorder that causes skin cells to multiply faster than normal, making the skin build up into bumpy red patches covered with white scales. Psoriasis is also associated with a range of comorbidities, such as psoriatic arthritis or type 2 diabetes mellitus.

Psoriasis can negatively affect the psychosocial health of patients as they often face stigma and discrimination from the public as psoriasis is a lesser-known and widely misconceptualized disease. It has been reported that up to 89% of psoriasis patients feel shame and embarrassment over their appearance, with 42% suffering from a lack of confidence.

B. Challenges Identified

We have identified two problems we aim to address:

1. Societal stigma towards psoriasis patients
2. Lack of awareness about psoriasis

C. Underlying Problem

Given the lack of public awareness, empathy and interaction with psoriasis patients despite the prevalence of psoriasis in Singapore, how might we be able to reduce misconceptions and stigma surrounding psoriasis in order to build a psoriasis-friendly community where people can better empathise and understand psoriasis patients?

D. Plan of Action

In order to build a more psoriasis-friendly community, our project initially planned to support the patients through physical interaction sessions and events, while raising awareness for psoriasis and the PAS through social media. However, as the COVID-19 situation continued to worsen in the second quarter of the year, we decided to shift more effort and attention towards raising awareness in the community and online interactions.

Our social media campaign aimed to raise awareness for psoriasis through:

1. Providing factual information about psoriasis (Interviews with doctors and infographics)
2. Enabling the public to better empathise with patients' experiences (Documentary and Webinar)

Our online interactions aimed to help patients through:

1. Providing a listening ear and empathising with their challenges (Chit-chat sessions and interviews)
2. Providing them a platform to share their stories (Interaction session, Webinar and Documentary)

Section 2: Implementation of Action Plan

A. Actions and Outcomes to date

Month	Activity	Purpose
December	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Formation of CORE2. Goal setting3. Research	Preparation Needs Analysis
January	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reach out and meet with beneficiary2. Ideation3. Setting up of Instagram Account	Initiation of Project
February	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Chit-chat sessions with patients2. Start of social media campaign3. Designing of logo4. Attended talk by PAS	Interaction Needs Analysis Awareness

<p>March - April</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interaction session 2. Interview with doctor 3. PAS April Newsletter 	<p>Interaction</p> <p>Needs Analysis</p> <p>Awareness</p>
<p>May-June</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bubble Tea Sales 2. Webinar 3. Brochure Printing 4. Mindfulness Workshop by PAS 	<p>Fundraising</p> <p>Interaction</p> <p>Awareness</p>
<p>July - August</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PAS September Newsletter 2. Documentary Premiere 3. Interaction session 	<p>Interaction</p> <p>Awareness</p>

Section 3: Scope of Impact

A. Accomplishments

Interaction Sessions: Through our interaction sessions, we have impacted a total of **28 patients over 53 hours**. After the chit-chat sessions, we were better able to understand their experience with psoriasis, and patients were willing to share their stories through the Webinar and Documentary. Mindfulness sessions were conducted during the group interaction sessions to promote the importance of mental health.

Instagram: With over **150 followers**, @proj.contego has been able to reach out to more than **1000 members** of the public over a period of eight months.

Webinar: Through our webinar, we were able to obtain **62 sign-ups** and **50 attendees**. Meaningful sharings were conducted by Dr Colin Theng and a patient, Mr Edmund Lau. Participants were able to gain new knowledge on psoriasis and how they should better empathize with patients.

Bubble Tea Sale: Fundraising event where we bulk ordered from iTEA to get Bubble Tea at a discounted price. We were able to raise a total of **\$439.20 over 113 orders**.

PAS Newsletter: PAS Newsletter is a newsletter released by our beneficiary to **500 people** every few months in order to allow members to stay updated with recent news regarding psoriasis.

Brochures: We designed and printed **200 brochures** containing valuable information regarding psoriasis to be distributed to patients and members of the public.

Documentary: Our Documentary Premiere had over **46 attendees**, and the documentary obtained over **150 views** after it was posted on our social media platforms.

B. Reflections

Through this meaningful journey since the start of the year, we were able to interact with many psoriasis patients and understand the many challenges they face. Many patients shared cases where they were discriminated against or stigmatised, and that many members of the public still hold misconceptions about psoriasis.

We have learnt to empathise with psoriasis patients and were inspired by the personal stories which they willingly shared with us. Despite often being the victims of discrimination, many patients remained resilient and still held an optimistic attitude towards life. Throughout this project, we learnt to value the importance of being comfortable in our own skin and are grateful for this opportunity to have a meaningful and genuine impact on the lives of psoriasis patients by fostering a more psoriasis-friendly society.

C. Scope of Impact

Community Impact: With all our events, the public has become more aware and knowledgeable about psoriasis, thus enabling them to show more care and empathy towards psoriasis patients in public. By reducing misconceptions and stigma surrounding psoriasis through the various programmes, Project Contego has contributed to building a more psoriasis-friendly society.

Impact on people with Psoriasis: Through our various interaction sessions with psoriasis patients, we have been able to provide a pillar of support for them through these tough times. Through raising awareness, we also hope that these patients would be able to live without fear of being targeted or being side-lined by members of the public

Resolution of UP: Given that we have identified that there was a lack of awareness regarding psoriasis in Singapore and the many misconceptions surrounding it, we have allowed patients to share their unique experience through interaction sessions and held events to expose the public to psoriasis which would reduce prior stigma and help to establish a psoriasis-friendly community.

(1000 words)

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