

# Scarring and the Psychosocial Impact on Surgical Patients:

## Integrative Literature Review

### Abstract

**Background:** Skin scars have the potential to impact patients in a variety of ways which can include impaired psychological, physical, social, and emotional well-being. Beginning in the 1990s, guidelines were created for patient-reported outcomes (PRO) to measure these patient specific concepts of scarring. but guidelines require refinement.

**Objectives:** The primary objective was to examine validated instruments to measure the psychosocial impact of surgical patients in relation to their acquired scar.

**Methods:** An integrative literature review was conducted to analyze results and findings of different validated instruments to measure skin scarring and the concurrent psychosocial impacts for postoperative patients.

**Results:** A total of (n= 11) journals were evaluated all of which used an assessment instrument to evaluate cosmetic outcomes of surgical scars. The most popular assessment used in the literature was the POSAS (n= 7) followed by the MSS (n=3), VAS (n=2), PRISM (n=2), PSAQ (n=2), VSS (n=1) and PSS (n=1).

**Conclusions:** While the current validated tools available cover a wide variety of measurement needed to evaluate postoperative scarring, they continue to show limitations. It is important to further the development of reliable and validated measurements to determine patients' quality of life and the psychosocial impact of surgical scars.

**Keywords:** *surgical scarring, psychosocial impact, satisfaction, patient reported outcomes*