Psoriasis is a chronic and systemic inflammatory skin disorder. The most common form of the disease is plaque psoriasis with approximately 80% of the overall patient population affected. Psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis can affect people in many ways beyond the lesions that most people recognise.

**SKIN**
Psoriasis is a systemic inflammatory condition characterised by raised lesions on the skin. It can occur on any part of the body including the hands, as we see with Élodie. When a person has psoriasis, their skin replacement process speeds up, taking just a few days to replace skin cells that usually take 21-28 days. This abundance of skin cells builds up to form raised ‘plaques’ on the skin, which can also be flaky, scaly, red on caucasian skin, darker patches on darker skin tones, and itchy.

**NAIL AND SCALP**
Psoriasis lesions can often be found on areas close to the joints such as the elbows and knees but can also appear on the scalp. Scalp symptoms are known to persist in 84% of cases. Nail psoriasis affects up to 50% of people with psoriasis and up to 90% of people living with psoriatic arthritis.

**ITCH**
Research tells us that itching (also known as pruritus by some medical professionals) is one of the most bothersome symptoms affecting patients. Up to 84% of people with psoriasis experience itching, and over a third of patients cite it as the most important factor contributing to their disease.

Some patients are known to experience itch more at night (52%) and in the evening (27%). Itch symptoms are associated with difficulty in falling asleep in a significant proportion of patients (69%), and sufferers can often be kept awake by their itching - as we see with Élodie – leading to fatigue.

Multiple Disease Manifestations

Millefeuille is a work of creative fiction which unfolds the life-changing friendship between Élodie and Holly, it draws inspiration from the very real suffering of up to 19 million people in Europe who battle the complex symptoms of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Psoriasis alone makes up over 14 million of these cases.

To ensure the accurate portrayal of the patient experience within this fictional story, the Millefeuille script was reviewed by two expert consultants who assessed the content for medical-scientific accuracy - Professor Nikhil Yawalkar, Head of Dermatology at the University Hospital Bern, Switzerland and Professor Ennio Lubrano, Aggregate Professor of Rheumatology and Professor of the PhD School in Health Sciences at the University of Molise, Italy.

Let’s take a deeper look inside the movie to learn more about Élodie’s condition...
Psoriatic arthritis is a chronic condition characterised by pain, stiffness, swelling and tenderness of the joints, and a decrease in physical functioning.\(^\text{12}\)

45% of patients with psoriatic arthritis think that the most important factor contributing to severity of the condition is the pain and swelling of joints.\(^\text{8}\)

The most affected areas are the knees (41%) and the fingers (26%).\(^\text{8}\)

Psoriatic arthritis occurs in up to 34% of those diagnosed with psoriasis; this inflammatory condition can lead to swollen and tender joints, causing chronic pain and reduced physical fitness.\(^\text{10}\)

75% of people living with psoriasis believe it has a negative impact on their quality of life and the condition can make even the simplest of day-to-day tasks more complicated.\(^\text{13}\)

Élodie’s psoriatic arthritis causes inflammation at her joints, which lead to swelling and tenderness but often a lot of pain. People with psoriatic arthritis often experience a loss of physical function which can make everyday tasks a real struggle; things like bending down to pick up clothes, getting dressed, and – as we see here – carrying shopping bags.\(^\text{8}\)

Patients with psoriatic arthritis commonly complain of fatigue and sleep disturbances, and almost 50% of patients with psoriasis report some level of sleep disturbance. This can have a significant negative impact on patients’ day-to-day lives, and we can visibly see this is affecting Élodie throughout the film.\(^\text{14}\)

The pain in Élodie’s hands is caused by dactylitis also known as “sausage fingers” which causes swelling and pain in these joints specifically. A substantial number – 41% – of people living with psoriatic arthritis suffer from dactylitis in the fingers and also the toes.\(^\text{11}\)

Another symptom of psoriatic arthritis associated with pain in the joints is enthesitis, soreness and inflammation at sites where tendons or ligaments insert into bone known to affect up to 71% of patients.\(^\text{11}\) Élodie struggles with pain in her ankles as she attempts to bend down to pick up a broken plate.

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**DEPRESSION**

“It’s like a ride where you cannot keep control of your head or your body but I can’t get off whatever I do I can’t make the ride stop.”

Psoriasis is known to cause social isolation in many people and people with psoriasis are twice as likely to become depressed as the rest of the population.14

**SOCIAL ANXIETIES**

83% of patients with psoriasis actively conceal the visible signs of their disease, as Élodie does when she hears a knock at the door.15

Over 80% of patients experience self-consciousness, anger, frustration, helplessness or embarrassment and this can be incredibly draining for people with the disease.15

**EMOTIONAL STRESSORS**

“I have been alone for a long time now, Holly.”

It is important to understand the role that Élodie’s personal circumstances played in the worsening of her condition.

We meet Élodie 20 years after her initial psoriasis diagnosis, and a series of emotional and traumatic life events have contributed to the gradual worsening of her condition. For many patients, worsening physical manifestations can fuel the development of further emotional complications, and vice versa. Without timely and effective management they can together create a profound and long-term burden on people living with these conditions.

**WORK**

“It’s becoming more and more painful. I can’t even chop, or hold a pan still.”

The complications of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis also affect the economy and wider society; over a third of people suffering with both psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis will miss more than 10 working days in a typical month because of their disease.15 We see that Élodie was required to quit her job completely because she could no longer perform simple chef duties such as holding a saucepan. This wider disease impact is often misunderstood and can be under-reported because it can be difficult to measure.

**ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

The impact of these conditions goes beyond even the physical and psychological. The humanitarian, social and economic costs of the condition are immense.17

Overall, 88% of patients report that psoriasis affects their overall emotional wellbeing, and for 82% of sufferers, the condition interferes with their enjoyment of life.15

**EMOTIONAL COMPLICATIONS**

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A STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM

The blossoming friendship between Élodie and Holly is a poignant example of the transformative impact that social inclusion, emotional stability and an optimistic outlook can have on the wellbeing of people with psoriasis.

A strong support system can often help patients to overcome societal stigma and approach the management of their disease in a more positive and proactive way.

Join us on Instagram @Millefeuille.Movie and #BakeADifference and visit MillefeuilleMovie.com for more information.