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Characteristics and disease burden of atopic dermatitis in Australia

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Objective: This study examines the current characteristics of AD and the burden placed on adults living with moderate to severe AD in Australia.

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Background & Objective

Background

- In Australia, atopic dermatitis (AD) prevalence is estimated to be 16.4%¹, or up to 2.8 million Australians.
- ~20% of these have moderate-to-severe AD¹
- Unfortunately, there is limited up-to-date evidence in the literature quantifying the disease burden of moderate-to-severe AD in Australia.

Objective

- This study examines the current characteristics of AD and the burden placed on adults living with moderate to severe AD in Australia.

1. Chidwick K, Busingye D, Pollack A, Osman R, Yoo J, Blogg S, Rubel D, Smith S. Prevalence, incidence and management of atopic dermatitis in Australian general practice using routinely collected data from MedicineInsight. *Australas J Dermatol.* 2020 Aug;61(3):e319-e327. doi: 10.1111/ajd.13268. Epub 2020 Mar 15. PMID: 32173859; PMCID: PMC7496939.

Methods

- A cross-sectional online survey of adults with moderate-to-severe AD (n = 300) enrolled in October 2024, examined self-reported demographics, AD characteristics, and burden of disease.
- The survey consisted of multiple Patient Reported Outcomes (PRO) measures and de novo questions about participants, including AD perceptions and knowledge, quality of life, and social impact of AD, including the following validated PRO measures:
 - Patient Global Impression of Severity (PGI-S)
 - POEM Scale (AD severity)
 - Fitzpatrick Skin Scale (FSS)
 - Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI)

Methods

Participants

- The study enrolled adult Australian residents who self-reported as having moderate or severe AD, according to the PGI-S standardised scale.
- People with current or prior diagnosis of lupus erythematosus or skin cancer were excluded.
- Among the 3,011 people who volunteered for enrolment, 300 (10.0%) were eligible to participate and completed the survey.

Analyses

- All analyses were descriptive and assessed by self-reported AD severity subgroups:

Results - Demographics

Table 1 - Participant Demographics

Characteristic	Moderate AD (N=150)	Severe AD (N=150)	Current Advanced Therapy ^a (N=75)
Age (years), Mean (SD)	41.4 (13.61)	35.1 (8.78)	37.7 (7.87)
Gender n (%), Female	96 (64.0%)	65 (43.3%)	21 (28.0%)
Ethnicity ^b , n (%)			
Caucasian	113 (75.3%)	96 (64.0%)	53 (70.7%)
Asian	19 (12.7%)	23 (15.3%)	7 (9.3%)
Other	18 (12.0%)	31 (20.7%)	15 (20.0%)
Fitzpatrick Skin Scale, n (%)			
Pale white skin	9 (6.0%)	7 (4.7%)	4 (5.3%)
White skin	75 (50.0%)	63 (42.0%)	31 (41.3%)
Light brown or darker skin	66 (44.4%)	80 (53.3%)	40 (53.3%)

Abbreviations: AD, atopic dermatitis; N, number of participants; SD, standard deviation.
^a Severe participants; ^b Only clinician specialties with ≥ 10 total participants are presented.

Results – Characteristics

Table 2 - AD Characteristics by Severity and Therapy Subgroups

Characteristic	Moderate AD (N=150)	Severe AD (N=150)	Current Advanced Therapy ^a (N=75)
Age at AD diagnosis (years)			
Mean (SD)	25.3 (15.68)	29.6 (10.88)	30.7 (11.6)
AD currently active, n (%)			
Yes	139 (92.7%)	138 (92.0%)	65 (86.7%)
Days with active flares in the last 6 months, mean (SD)	57.4 (68.42)	56.3 (63.48)	72.9 (67.03)
Comorbid conditions, n (%)			
≥1 comorbid condition	110 (73.3%)	35 (23.3%)	14 (18.7%)
Allergies	70 (46.7%)	17 (11.3%)	10 (13.3%)
Anxiety	51 (34.0%)	21 (14.0%)	6 (8.0%)
Depression	34 (22.7%)	7 (4.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Psoriasis	24 (16.0%)	3 (2.0%)	1 (1.3%)
High blood pressure	20 (13.3%)	6 (4.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Other	64 (42.7%)	22 (14.7%)	11 (14.7%)

Abbreviations: AD, atopic dermatitis; SD, standard deviation.

^a Severe participants; ^b Only clinician specialties with ≥ 10 total participants are presented.

Results – Characteristics: Flare and POEM

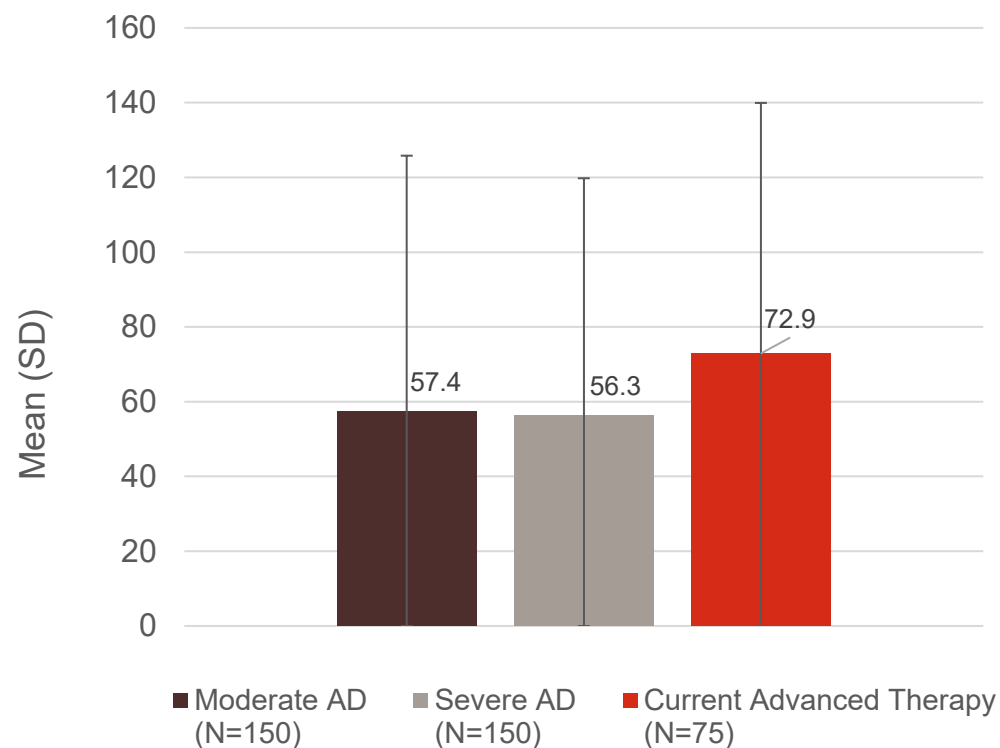


Figure 1 – Days with active flares in the previous 6 months

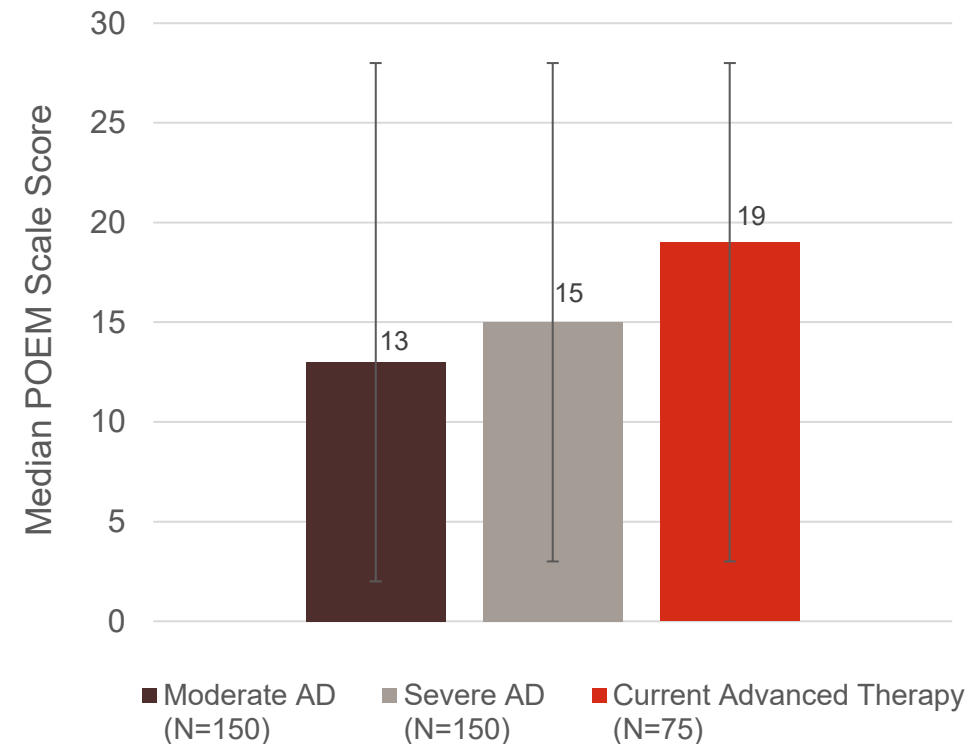


Figure 2 – POEM median score by AD severity

Results – Characteristics: POEM

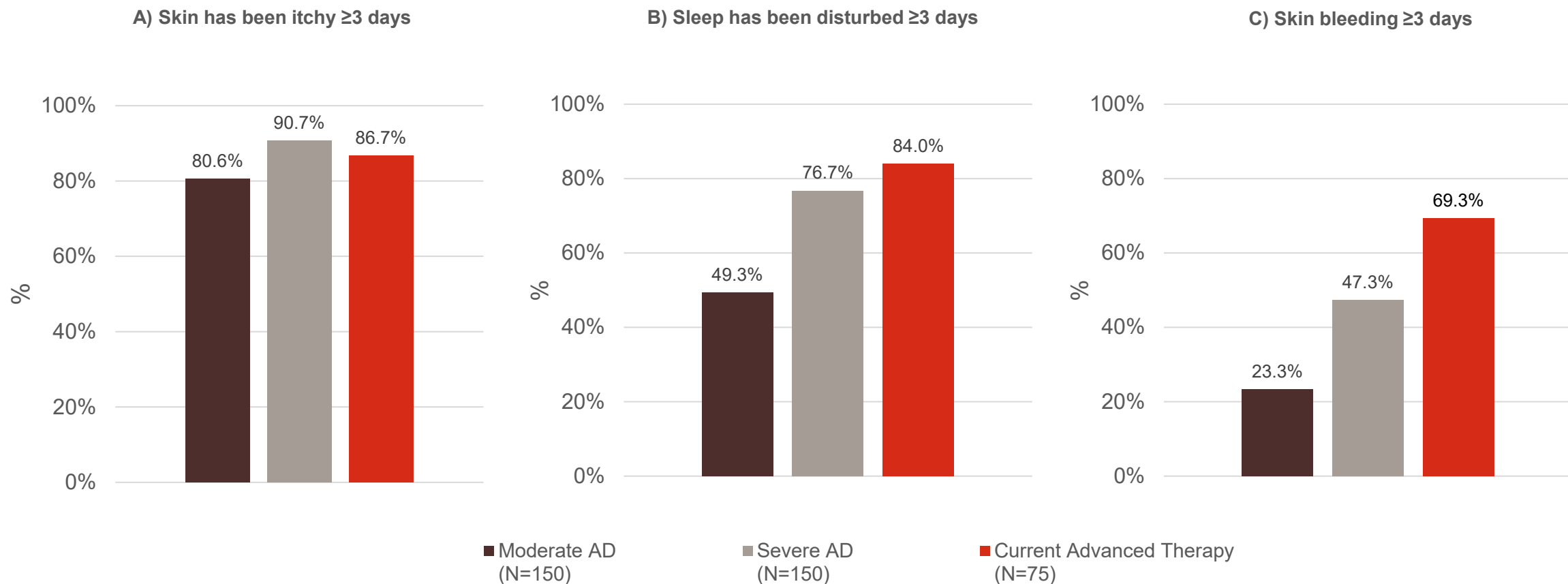


Figure 3 – POEM AD symptoms in the past week

Results – DLQI and Impact on Work Hours

Figure 6 - DLQI Index

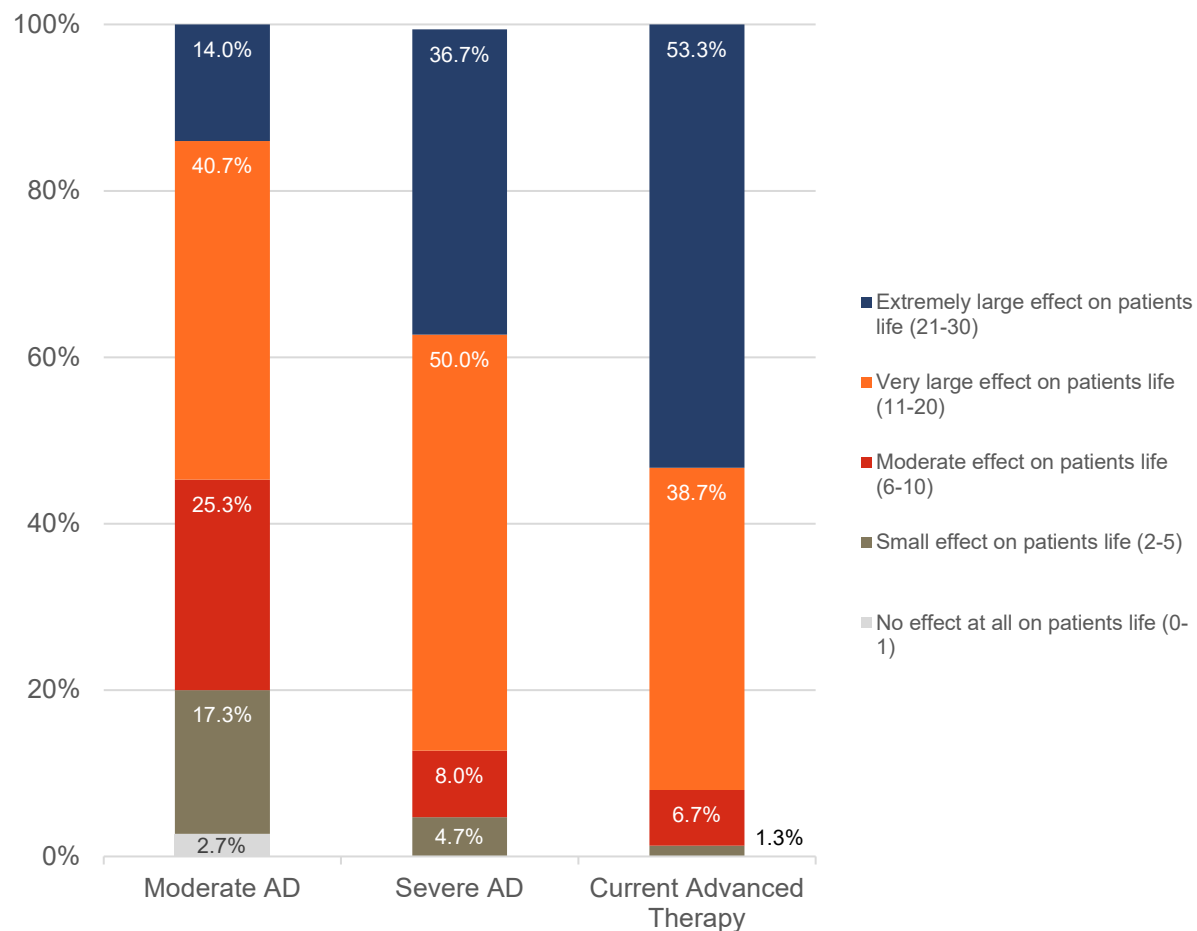
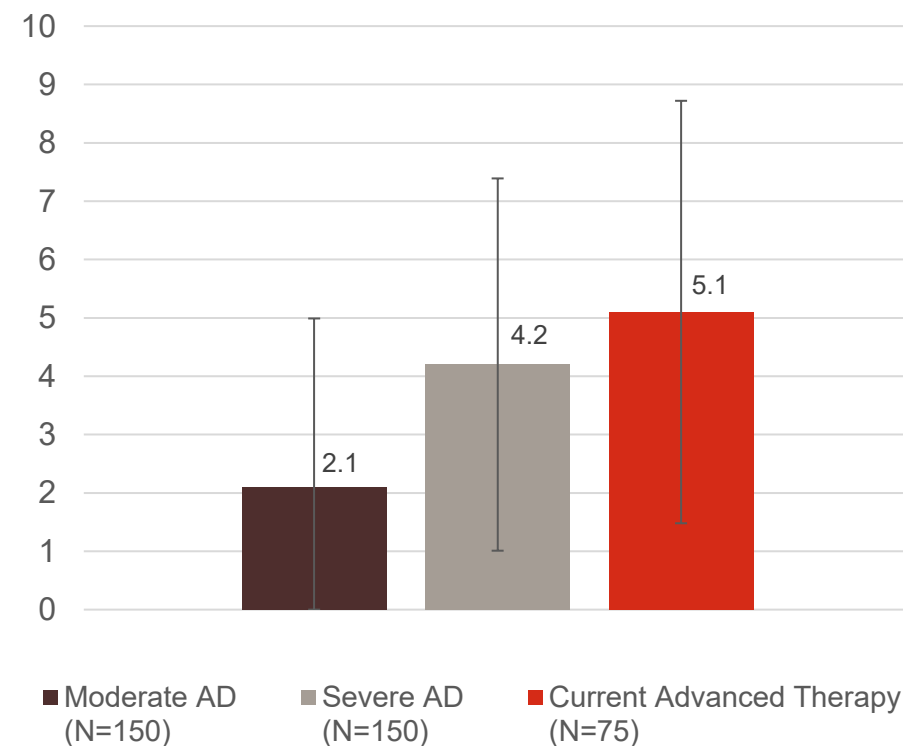


Figure 4 – Mean number of days with reduced work hours



Results – Impact on Work (career & worklife)

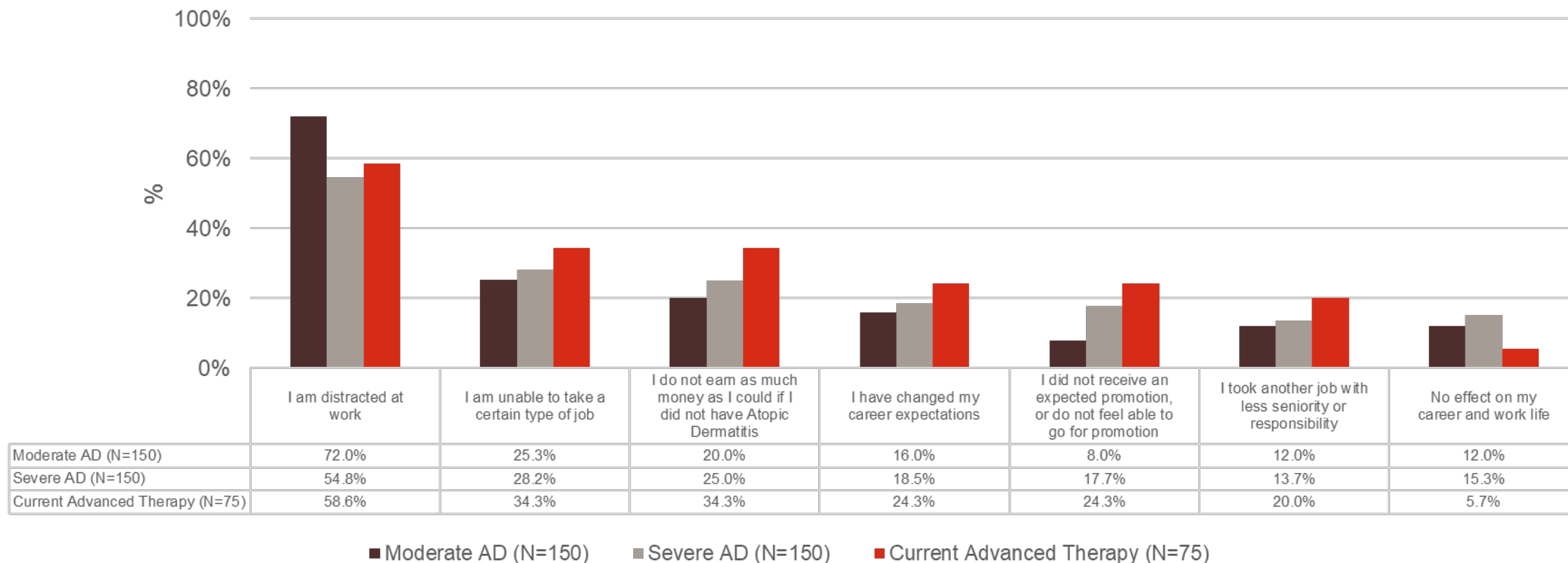


Figure 5 - Impact of AD on career and work life

Results – impact on personal life

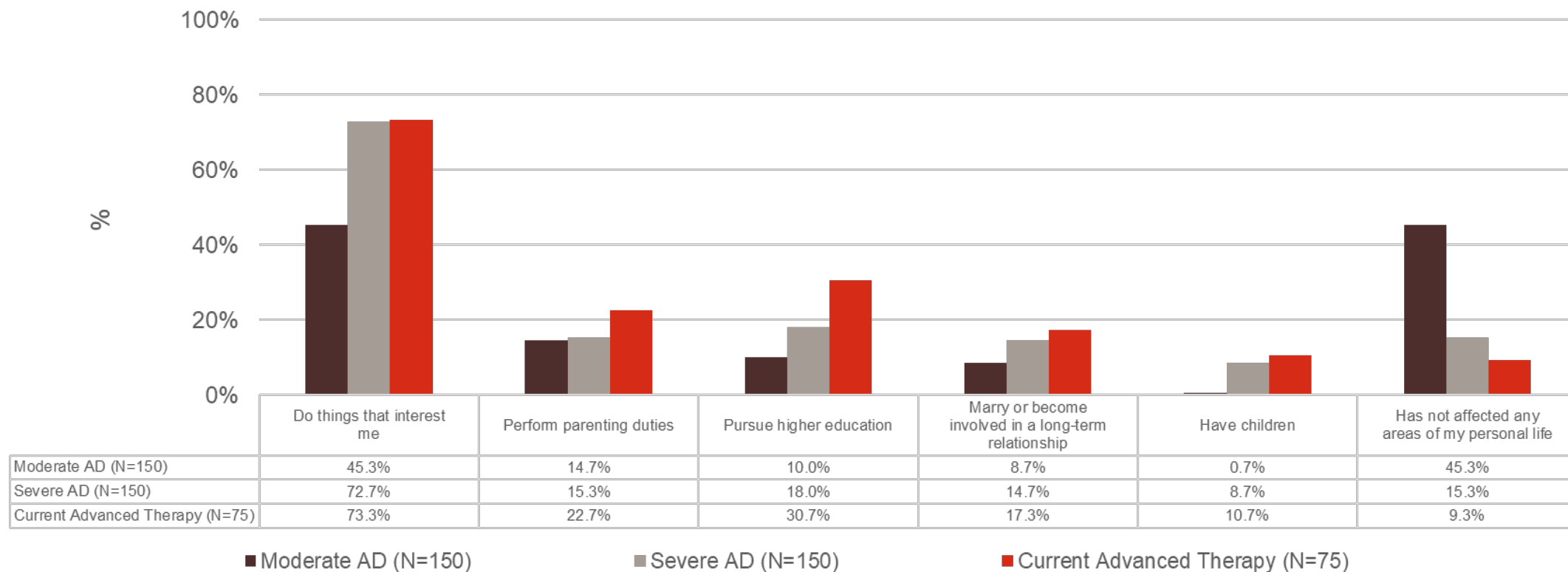


Figure 7 – AD impact on personal life

Conclusions

- People with moderate to severe AD experienced an average of 56 to 73 days in flare during the previous 6 months
- Substantial number of people in all subgroups experienced sleep disturbance, itchy and bleeding skin for 3 or more days per week.
- People on advanced therapy in this cohort continue to experience high disease burden.
- The majority reported AD having a very or extremely large effect on their quality of life, and work and personal life impairment was high in all subgroups.
- There is a need for new treatments in Australia to alleviate AD patient burden.