

**“I don’t have the hair anymore!”**

# Perceived barriers and enablers to physical activity participation in individuals with Alopecia Areata



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## Introduction and Aim

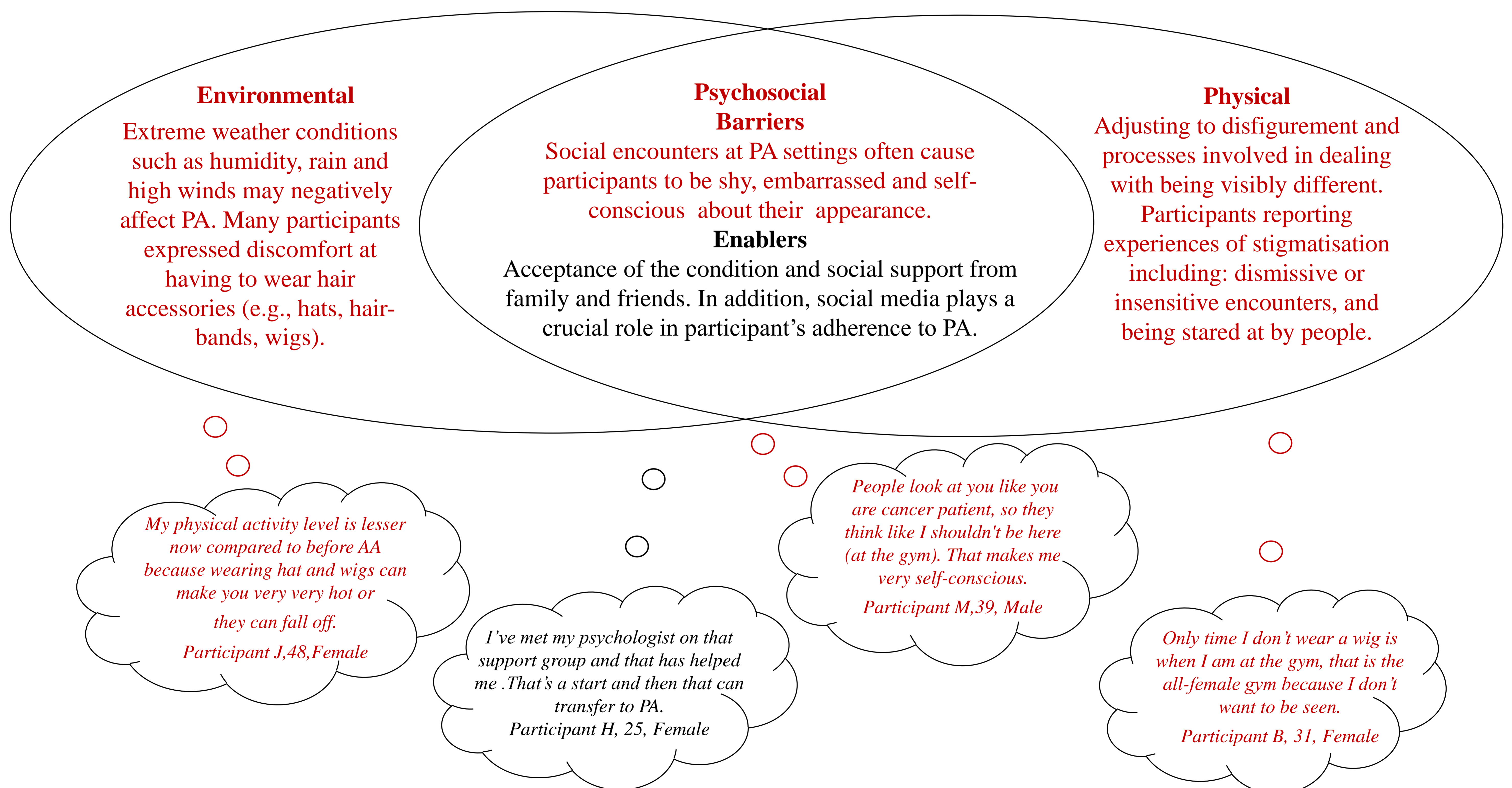
Alopecia Areata (AA) is an autoimmune condition that is characterised by hair loss [1]. There is currently no effective treatment and individuals with AA often report feelings of hopelessness and despair due to the resultant cosmetic sequela. Participation in physical activity (PA) has been associated with better mental health outcomes [2]. A preliminary study of individuals with AA indicated that severe hair loss is associated with stress, anxiety and symptomatic depression, which negatively impact PA participation [3]. While strategies to increase participation in PA in the general population have been established, little is known about whether these strategies increase activity and improve mood in people with AA. This study **aimed** to understand the barriers and enablers to PA in individuals with AA to inform the development of evidence-based interventions.

## Methods

**Study design:** A qualitative study using a focus group (8 participants [33.38±10.81years]) and semi-structured individual telephone interviews (8 participants [33.89±11.87years]) was conducted in Melbourne, Australia.

**Data analyses:** Interview data were recorded digitally, transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically. Data triangulation method was used to determine emergent themes generated through examination of participant’s responses. Recruitment continued until no new themes emerged.

## Results



## Conclusion and Implications

Themes showed the experiences of individuals with AA involved both barriers and enablers of PA. Findings from this study can inform intervention and addressing behaviour change related to physical activity for individuals with AA. Given the diverse range of attitudes to PA identified, PA interventions may need to be designed to cater for individual attitudes and circumstances.

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## References

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