

Original Article

Prevalence of Skin Diseases amongst the Adult Patients attending a Homeopathic Clinic - A Retrospective Study

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ABSTRACT:

Background: People with skin diseases usually seek different types of treatment for cure because of their chronic nature. Prevalence of patients attending homeopathic clinic for treatment of skin diseases varies worldwide. As the local information about this data is scarce, this study was done with an objective to assess the prevalence of skin diseases amongst patients attending a homeopathic clinic. **Materials and Methods:** Data was collected from the medical register from the outpatient data of a homeopathic clinic from October 2017 to December 2017. Age, gender, education level and marital status was recorded. The type of skin disease was recorded from the established diagnosis of each case. **Results:** Out of 100 patients with skin disease, 50 were males and 50 were females. Mean age range was 46 for males and 53 for females. The commonest skin condition was psoriasis, seen mainly in males, followed by scleroderma. **Conclusion:** There is a good prevalence of skin diseases amongst the patients attending a homeopathic clinic. More studies including elaborate data from different regions of the country can give better insight about the health care needs of adults with skin diseases. A standard protocol in homeopathy for treatment of such conditions can thus be developed.

Keywords: Adult, Homeopathy, Prevalence, Skin diseases.

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INTRODUCTION

Skin diseases, though very common in many developing countries, are not often regarded as a significant health problem even when serious diseases may be heralded by skin changes.¹

Most of these dermatologic diseases are chronic in nature and they decrease the quality of life of a person in day to day routine.² Despite the high morbidity and substantial load for primary health care, epidemiological studies addressing the overall prevalence of skin diseases at population level (among a healthy population) are sparse.^{3,4,5} Also, the prevalence of skin lesions from different clinical settings like dermatology clinics, general outpatient clinics, primary health centres and others may vary based on patient's choice and comfort. Patients seeking homeopathic treatment for skin disease treatment may also be variable. There is a lack of this data of the patients with skin diseases reporting to a homeopathic clinic. This study was thus undertaken to explore the prevalence of skin diseases seen at a general urban homeopathic outpatient clinic.

Furthermore, the association between skin disorders and clinical features like sex and education level of a person

is poorly understood. Consequently, another aim was to investigate the possible sex differences in skin diseases and finally, the association between skin diseases and education level.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This retrospective study included the adult patients attending homeopathic clinic for treatment of skin diseases from October 2017 to December 2017. Patients above 30 years of age with a known diagnosed skin condition of either sex were included in the study. Any patient without diagnosed skin disease and under any other therapy for present skin disease were excluded from the study. The medical register of patients attending the clinic was used to extract the data regarding age, sex, marital status, education level and the type of skin disease through diagnosis. The association of the socioeconomic status with the prevalence of skin diseases was investigated by analyzing the relationship between the level of education and the cutaneous findings. The data was tabulated and analysed through descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

Characteristics of the study population: Out of total of 100 cases, an equal male to female prevalence was observed. Mean age of patients was 46 for males and 53 for females. Of them, 80 were married while 13 were single and 2 were widow/ widower. Percentage of married was more for males than females. Almost 29% of the patients had secondary level education, 28% had completed tertiary level and 43% had basic education. (Table 1)

Prevalence of skin findings and diseases: The skin diseases that were diagnosed included Lichen planus, psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, leukoderma, scleroderma, Systemic lupus erythematosus and eczema. Psoriasis was the most common skin disease observed in 32% of the patients followed by scleroderma (21%). (Table 2)

Socioeconomic status and the prevalence of skin diseases: We analyzed the association of socioeconomic status, defined as education level, with the prevalence of skin diseases. When compared with tertiary education level, eczema was most common. Atopic dermatitis was more common among those with secondary level education. Psoriasis was most observed skin disease in patients with basic level of education.

Table 1: Characteristics of the study population

	Total (100)	Males (50)	Females (50)
Age (Mean)	49.5	46	53
Marital status			
Married	80	42	38
Single	13	7	6
Widow/ Widower	7	1	6
Education Level			
Basic (upto matric)	43	23	20
Secondary (upto 12th standard)	29	16	13
Tertiary (Graduation or higher)	28	11	17

Table 2: Prevalence of found skin diseases in the study population, their total numbers and distribution by sex

Name of Skin disease	Total (number)	Males	Females
Lichen planus	13	6	7
Psoriasis	32	18	14
Atopic dermatitis	16	12	4
Leukoderma	12	6	6
Scleroderma	21	14	7
SLE	4	1	3
Eczema	2	1	1

DISCUSSION

Skin diseases comprise a great socioeconomic problem especially in developing countries. The WHO (World Health Organization) in a workshop in 2004 has advocated for strengthening of community dermatology for developing countries. ¹ These efforts may help address the problem of misdiagnosis and management of these disorders. To advocate these services, there is an essential need to know the prevalence of different skin diseases

and different types of treatment which patients seek for them. As the data in this context is scarce, there is need for studies to assess the prevalence of skin diseases. Furthermore the information on patients seeking homeopathy as a treatment strategy for skin diseases is scarce in the published literature and that too in context with our country. This study aimed at assessing the prevalence of skin diseases amongst the adults attending a homeopathic clinic.

Out of total of 350 patients who came to homeopathy clinic, 100 patients reported with skin diseases (29%). Mean age was higher for females as compared to males. An equal ratio was observed for males and females. Percentage of married was more for males than females whereas level of tertiary education was more for females than males. Most of the patients had only basic level of education (43%). Less awareness and poor knowledge can lead to development of chronicity of skin lesions.

Psoriasis was the most commonly observed skin disease followed by scleroderma. Males were affected more than females. Lichen plans and SLE were more common in females whereas lichen planus, psoriasis, atopic dermatitis were predominant in males. Leukoderma and eczema showed equal prevalence amongst males and females.

From this study, we infer that prevalence of patients with skin diseases attending homeopathic clinic is fair. Health education is therefore necessary to curb their spread, reduce the associated morbidity, and improve the health status of the population. A sincere effort should be made to train health workers in the diagnosis and treatment of the common skin diseases.

CONCLUSION

As this is a preliminary study, we were unable to find any such data being reported in literature. More studies with longer duration and different locations can give better insight into the prevalence of patients with skin diseases seeking homeopathy as a mode of treatment.

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