

Epidemiology and risk factors of atopic dermatitis among children in Basrah, Iraq

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ABSTRACT

Atopic dermatitis is a major public health problem, especially among children and has an economic burden at family and community levels. The present research aimed to study the frequency, distribution and determinants of atopic dermatitis in Basrah city, Iraq. A cross-sectional study was carried out between December 2020 and March 2021 at the dermatology outpatient clinic of Alfayhaa Hospital in Basrah, Iraq. The overall prevalence of the disease among children was 21.3 %. The age-specific prevalence rate among infantile, childhood and adolescent groups were 40.7%, 21.7%, and 12.1%, respectively. One hundred Four children who attended the dermatology outpatient clinic were diagnosed with Atopic dermatitis. The mean age of the patients was 6.6 ± 2.8 years. In 87.5% of the cases, the onset of disease was before two years of age. Using objective scoring atopic dermatitis (SCORAD), the disease was classified into mild, moderate and severe with a percentage of 10.6, 83.6, and 5.8, respectively. There was no significant association between the severity of atopic dermatitis with early-onset, positive family history of atopy, nor a high body mass index (BMI). We recommend further large-scale and community-based studies to estimate the real burden of the disease with emphasis on preventive measures.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Atopic dermatitis (AD) is a chronic, pruritic inflammatory skin disease with exacerbations and remission. The onset is usually before the age of two years. AD is frequently seen associated with a personal or a family history of atopy [1]. AD is one of the commonest chronic inflammatory skin disorders affecting 10–20% of children and 1–3% of adults worldwide [2]. The prevalence is higher in developed nations. Over the past thirty years, the prevalence had increased by two to three folds in both developed and developing countries [3].

Knowledge about the epidemiology and the associated risk factors for AD among children in a Middle Eastern country with a hot climate, such as Iraq, is insufficient. Only one study in Basrah was published during the last decade that discussed the age-specific prevalence of AD [4]. AD can affect patients' functionality, mental well-being, and social interactions. The study aimed to investigate the clinico-epidemiological features of AD in Basrah city, Iraq. The study draws attention to modifiable risk factors to aid in disease prevention.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

A cross-sectional study was carried out to show the frequency, distribution and determinants of AD in Basrah city, Iraq. All the children aged less than 16 attended the dermatology outpatient clinic of Al-Alfayhaa