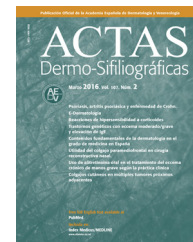




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COMMENTARIES

Eczema and Urticaria in Portugal: On the Importance of Descriptive Studies[☆]



La importancia de los estudios descriptivos. Eczema y urticaria en Portugal

The management of skin diseases represents a major burden for health care systems. These conditions can have a considerable impact on the quality of life of the affected patients and in some cases cause disability.

Globally, in 2010, skin conditions were the fourth cause of nonfatal disease burden in terms of years lost due to disability and skin disease posed the 18th highest burden in terms of loss of health due to premature death expressed as disability-adjusted life years (DALYs).¹

Epidemiological data on skin diseases vary widely between countries and populations. One methodology frequently used for these studies is to obtain data by way of questionnaires or interviews. When correctly implemented, these methods can provide valuable information on prevalence and incidence, despite the low response rates typical of this type of study.

The objective of the study by Carvalho et al.² reported in this issue was to investigate the epidemiology of the prevalence of eczema and urticaria in Portugal using a

telephone survey to obtain the data. In the authors' opinion, the study has contributed to the knowledge of the epidemiology of these diseases by providing updated data on the adult population. The exhaustive sample provides a good representation of the population in general in terms of region and sex, and the study detected significant differences between groups.

Hopefully, future studies will allow us to analyze in greater detail explanatory factors and differences in the care provided, the treatments used, and the cost of care.

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Seasonal Variations in Dermatology Diagnoses[☆]



La influencia estacional en los diagnósticos dermatológicos

In a study published in this issue, González-Cantero et al.¹ report the results of a survey of Spanish dermatologists undertaken to investigate seasonal differences in dermatological diagnoses. Their findings reveal a number of interesting patterns. In the overall analysis, the most

frequent diagnoses (actinic keratoses, other malignant neoplasms of skin, and melanocytic nevi) are constant throughout the year, with no differences being observed between the warm and cold seasons. However, seasonal differences were detected in other frequent diagnoses, such as acne (more common in the cold season) and other benign neoplasms (more common in the hot season). These findings reflect the growing understanding on the part of family practitioners and the general population about the seasonal effect of certain acne treatments, such as oral retinoids.

Comparison of the data from the public and private sectors, on the other hand, clearly showed the predominance of pre-malignant, malignant, and inflammatory skin conditions in patients treated in the public health system vs the higher percentage of diagnoses of benign conditions in

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