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ABSTRACT BOOK



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EXPLORING THE CORRELATION BETWEEN CORTICOPHOBIA AND QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG CHILDREN AND PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH ATOPIC DERMATITIS

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Introduction: Atopic dermatitis (AD) is a chronic inflammatory cutaneous disorder. Topical corticosteroids (TCS) combined with emollients remain the mainstay of AD treatment. Their efficacy and safety, when appropriately used, has been clearly established. Paradoxically, the fear of using TCS (usually called „topical corticophobia (TCP)“) is a frequent concern for patients and their parents. TCP may impair adherence to treatment regimen, leading to an uncontrolled disease with a negative impact on patients' and parents' quality of life.

Objectives: To assess TCP and investigate the correlation between TCP and Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI) scores of children and parents of children with AD.

Methods: Single-center cross-sectional study conducted between December 2020 and December 2022, of patients (0–17 years), diagnosed with AD, recruited through consecutive sampling during dermatology outpatient clinic appointments. Enrolled participants completed self-report questionnaires, including, DLQI according to age and the adapted Lithuanian version of the TOPICOP questionnaire. TOPICOP responses were scored on a four-point Likert scale, with a maximum cumulative score of 36, while FDLQI and DLQI scores measured on a scale 0 to 30. The study conducted statistical analyses using Microsoft Excel and R Commander package for R. A p-value <0.05 was considered significant. Study was approved by Biomedical Ethics Committee (Approval No. 2020/8-1251-733).

Results: We analyzed 238 TOPICOP and DLQI questionnaires. Girls represented 49% (n=119). Mean age of patients was 6,84±4,43 years. The prevalence of corticophobia in our study population was 55% (n=126). It was found that 32% (n=76) of the group had a high risk, 46% (n=109) had an intermediate risk of corticophobia. All DLQI scores of the impact of AD on the quality of family life (r=0.225), child's life (r=0.192) and infant's life (r=0.222) showed a statistically significant positive correlation with the severity of corticophobia (p<0.00; p=0.022; p=0.03).

Conclusions: The study revealed that corticophobia is prevalent among considerable number of AD patients and their parents that fall under high or intermediate risk. Notably, higher levels of corticophobia are associated with greater impact on both family and children with AD quality of life. Therefore we suggest that educating patients about the use of TCS could reduce the risk of phobia and improve adherence to treatment plans, ultimately improving quality of life.

Keywords: Atopic dermatitis; corticophobia; pediatrics; topical steroids; Topicop; DLQI