

PATTERNS OF VIRAL SKIN INFECTIONS IN SOHAG PROVINCE, EGYPT.

Essameldin A. Nada¹, Ramadan S. Saleh¹, Ahmed F. Hamed² and **Wesam M. Hussien**¹.

¹ Department of Dermatology, Venereology and Andrology, Faculty of Medicine, Sohag University, Egypt.

² Department of Public Health and Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Sohag University, Egypt.

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Objective: The objective of this work was to determine the patterns of viral skin infections and their distribution among people in Sohag province; and to study the sociodemographic factors that may influence such distributions.

Methods: This study included patients of different age groups of both sex had viral skin infections attended the outpatient clinic of Dermatology at Sohag University Hospital from January 2009 to February 2010. Sociodemographic data and environmental and housing data were collected from all subjects. Clinical assessment of the patients was performed.

Results:

- Out of 1000 patients (4.9%) had viral skin infections.
- Viral warts were the commonest viral skin infections seen, affecting 68.1% of patients. Among these, common warts and plantar warts were the commonest accounted 29.5% and 27.6%; respectively.
- High prevalence rate of viral warts may be explained by direct and indirect transmission of infection. Positive family history was found in (26%) in our study.
- Chicken pox accounted for 20%; high prevalence rate of chicken pox cases may be due to affection of school children, overcrowding and poor housing conditions.
- Herpes simplex 5%; low prevalence of herpes simplex noted in this study, may be related to the presence of silent and asymptomatic cases. Serosurveys may be the best approaches to study the true epidemiology of HSV infections.
- In our study, herpes zoster demonstrated in 4.2% and molluscum contagiosum in 2.7% of viral skin infections.
- Out of these patients included in this study 489 (48.9%) were females and 511(51.1%) of the patients were males.
- In this study, the majority of patients infected with viral skin infections were observed in age groups (> 20-40 years). Approximately, one third (33.7%) of viral skin infection occurred among students.
- In this study, the prevalence of viral skin infections among patients coming from rural area (58%) was higher than urban area (42%).
- The prevalence of viral skin infections was found to be higher in patients living 3-or more per bedroom (65.2%) in comparison with those who are living alone (13.1%).
- There were significant relationships between distribution of viral skin infections and other environmental factors such as sewage disposal and ventilation.

Conclusion:

- This study highlights the extent and patterns of viral skin infections in Sohag province.
- Based on the results of this study, primary medical services needed to be focused in rural areas. Implementation of community health programs in rural areas and in areas experiencing chronic shortages of healthcare professionals may reduce the prevalence rate of viral skin infections.