A COMMUNITY EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEY ON THE PREVALENCE AND SEVERITY OF SENSITIVE SKIN SYNDROME IN HONG KONG

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Introduction: Sensitive skin syndrome (SSS) is a common skin condition reported globally. The pathogenetic mechanism is still elusive. Advancements in non-invasive neurosensory techniques like functional magnetic resonance imaging and low frequency electrical current stimulation and biophysical techniques like confocal Raman spectroscopy triangulate with multiple epidemiological studies unveil SSS as a complicated syndrome not only affecting the skin; its constituents but the peripheral and central nervous system including the affective domains of the brain.

Methodology: A community base subjects self-reported epidemiological survey was carried out in the month of January 2018 to assess the prevalence, epidemiology and risk factors of SSS locally using a validated 10 items questionnaire. A total of 500 subjects were interviewed in five different geographical locations. The questionnaire has been tested in many countries globally and with a good correlation with DLQI. The date, location, gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, number, gender and age of children, concomitant skin diseases were documented. Interviewed subjects with a self-reported sensitivity scores from 20 to 60 (or more) under the 10 items versions questionnaire was considered having SSS. The risk factors were analysed by Chi-Square analysis on categorical variables: area, gender, occupation, age groups, social class, marital status, children number, first child gender, second child gender, skin type, skin condition and Mann-Whitney U test on number of children, first child's second child's age. Logistic regression model was used to find out possible significant and marginally significant risk factors.

Results: Our results showed a female prevalence of 55% and male 43% in Hong Kong. The results are comparable to data reported in literatures in other countries but much higher than reported in mainland China. Significant risk factors or predictors of SSS are gender, area, pre-existing skin diseases. Atopic Dermatitis is the most common reported skin disease in this survey (21.2%), followed by urticaria (3.2%), psoriasis (2.65) and other skin diseases (13.4%). Xerosis and acne vulgaris contributed a high proportion of other skin diseases.

Conclusion: SSS is a prevalent condition in ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong. A 10 - items self-reported questionnaire is a convenient, non-invasive, quick and acceptable tool to study the epidemiology and prevalence of SSS in a community setting. Further researches should address its sensitivity in clinic setting for diagnosing SSS. The reasons for the discrepancy between the prevalence of SSS in China and Hong Kong should also be further investigated.

Recent Publications

1. Chan K T M (2018) Clinical review on sensitive skin: history, epidemiology, pathogenesis and management. J Clin Exp Dermatol Res 9:453.

Biography

Chan Kam Tim Michael is a practicing private Dermatologist in Hong Kong. He received Dermatology Specialist Fellowship at Hong Kong Academy of Medicine in 1998. In the same year, he was granted a Government of Hong Kong scholarship for post graduate training in UCLA, USA. He is now the Vice President of the Association of Integrative Aesthetic Medicine in Hong Kong. He was Editor of Hong Kong Journal of Dermatology and Venereology from 2002 to 2007. He acts as Editorial Board Member of the following international journals since 2017: Research Journal of Nervous System; The Cognitive Neuroscience Journal; Medical Reports and Case Studies and; Advances in Neurology and Neuroscience. He has been working at the University of Hong Kong as Honorary Clinical Assistant Professor from 2007 to 2009. He is now a part time Lecturer at Baptist University of Hong Kong for teaching master course in Public Health.

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