

Comparison of Allergic Contact Dermatitis Cases in the Private and Subsidised Clinics in the National Skin Centre, Singapore

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Abstract

Introduction: This is an epidemiologic study to compare allergic contact dermatitis patients in the private and subsidised clinics. **Patients and Methods:** All patients diagnosed to have allergic contact dermatitis in the National Skin Centre from January 1999 to June 1999 were studied retrospectively. **Results:** More private patients were evaluated for allergic contact dermatitis than subsidised patients in the study period (138 vs. 99). The female-to-male ratio in the paying clinics was greater than in the subsidised clinics (3:1 vs. 1:1). The mean age was the same for both groups i.e., 40 years. There was a greater proportion of unskilled workers attending the subsidised clinic (24.2% vs. 5.4%). The mean duration of rash before evaluation was longer for paying patients than for subsidised patients (31 vs. 22 months), but this was not statistically significant. A significant proportion of the patients had a history of atopic disease and endogenous dermatitis. The most frequent sites for allergic contact dermatitis were the face, hands and the exposed areas of the limbs. The most common allergens were nickel, cobalt and fragrance in the paying patients; and nickel, chromate and fragrance in the subsidised patients. **Conclusion:** More female patients with allergic contact dermatitis and more atopic patients were seen in the private clinics. The forearms, fingers, feet and ears were more commonly affected in the subsidised patients.

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