

DEPRESSION IN PATIENTS WITH PEMPHIGUS VULGARIS

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE

To determine the severity of depression in patients with pemphigus vulgaris.

STUDY DESIGN

Cross sectional study

PLACE AND DURATION OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted at the Department of Dermatology, Civil Hospital, Dow University of Health Sciences, Karachi.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

A total of 290 patients following the inclusion and exclusion criteria and after informed consent were recruited. The ethical approval of the study was obtained by the Civil hospital Karachi and DUHS Karachi. All the selected patients were then interviewed by the principal investigator for the diagnosis of depression according to criteria of ICD-10 classification and severity of depression was measured through Hamilton Depression scale. The age, gender and duration of pemphigus vulgaris was documented. The data was entered & analyzed in SPSS version 20.

RESULTS

There were 187 males and 103 female patients. The study results found a very high prevalence of depression 99.3% in the sample. 0.3% patients had mild depression, 41.7% had moderate depression and 58% had severe depression.

CONCLUSION

Patients with Pemphigus vulgaris exhibited significant depression and further studies should be conducted for further evaluation of depression along the clinical course of the disease.

KEY WORDS

Psychosocial Health, Dermatological disorder, Autoimmune skin disease

INTRODUCTION

Majority of people with depression had no awareness that they are suffering from treatable psychiatric illness and therefore do not seek proper consultation and treatment. Due to misconception, persistent ignorance and denial of the illness by the general public, which also includes many health care providers, the issue remain same and suffered people cannot be helped by mental health professionals.

Pemphigus vulgaris is an autoimmune potentially life threatening rare disorder of skin which is characterized by presence of antibodies to epidermal adhesion molecules. These patients suffer from painful chronic erosions which involves mucous membranes and skin. Only a few researchers have underlined the mental health status of patients suffering from pemphigus vulgaris¹.

There are two major subtypes of this disease. These include Pemphigus vulgaris and Pemphigus foliaceus. These subtypes are classified on the basis of depth of cleavage plane in the epidermis. There are a few studies reporting the influence of disease on the physical and psychological well being of the patients. All of these studies report negative influence on patient's mental health^{2,3}.

Pemphigus vulgaris is more common than pemphigus foliaceus. It has been estimated that pemphigus vulgaris is 9.5 times more common than pemphigus foliaceus. It is more common in middle aged females. Some patients with PV need high doses of steroids to resolve the symptoms and prevent relapse⁴.

It has been estimated that a wide variety of skin disorders are associated with presence of psychiatric disturbances leading to impaired quality of life. Care of patients' psychological well being along with management of skin disorder can ultimately improve the quality of life⁵.

The data on the mental health of patients with pemphigus vulgaris is scarce. Few available literature shows positive relationship of depression and pemphigus vulgaris. The correct estimation of the burden is essential in order to plan preventive and management strategies in these patients who are vulnerable to depression. Our study is expected to generate a valuable epidemiological data in this regard.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Participants

Total 290 patients with pemphigus vulgaris were purposefully selected from the

department of dermatology Civil hospital Karachi, their age ranged from 30 to 60 years.

Instruments

Patients were interviewed for the diagnosis of depression on the basis of ICD-10 and for severity of depression Hamilton rating scale for depression was used. Scoring was done according to the standard procedure of scale.

Procedure

Study was approved from the ethical committee of Dow University of Health Sciences. The Written and informed consent was also taken from each participant and the department of Dermatology Civil hospital Karachi. Matter of confidentiality, ethical consideration and objective of the study were guided to all the patients with pemphigus vulgaris. After collecting the data patients were appreciated for their voluntarily participation. In order to examine the study data SPSS v.20 was used. Descriptive statistics was used for evaluating frequency and severity of depression.

RESULTS

A total of 290 patients diagnosed with the pemphigus vulgaris were included in this study. There were 187 (64.5%) male and 103 (35.5%) females. The frequency of depression in the patients with Pemphigus vulgaris was about 288 (99.3%). 168 (57.9%) patients were severely depressed as per score on Hamilton Depression rating scale; while 121 (41.7%) were moderately depressed moderate in 121patients (see table 1).

Table 1
Severity of Depression in patients with Pemphigus vulgaris on HAMD (N=290)

HAMD Score	n(%)
Mild (8-17)	1(0.3)
Moderate (18-25)	121 (41.7)
Severe (≥26)	168 (57.9)

Note. *p< .01, AMs=Autobiographical Memories

DISCUSSION

The study results found a very high prevalence of depression 99.3% and majority were of severe depression. In 2006, a study was conducted with an objective to asses the impact on mental health status of patients with pemphigus vulgaris. The results concluded that compromised physical and psychosocial health was found. These results were in concordance to other studies determining the mental health of patients suffering from skin disturbances. The management of skin disorders must focus on the psychosocial aspect of the disease'. Studies conducted have shown strong relationship among disease status and mental health. 139 patients suffering from pemphigus vulgaris were enrolled. Results showed strong impact on their mental health during the course of disease^{2,3}.

Depression may often come as a complication or a result of primary skin illness. As the deformity and disfigurement is worse in Pemphigus vulgaris and it is difficult to treat disorder that has a great

impact on the patient's self.⁶ A research conducted in Iran, indicated that annual incidence rate of depression in patients with Pemphigus vulgaris was found as 78.6%.⁷ According to Indian research patients with PV were found to be at high risk of depression.⁸

Similar study conducted in Europe indicated that depression in patients with PV increasing yearly at high level.⁹ The result of above studies have similar findings in regard to our study about depression in patients with PV.

During six year period of study in the Mediterranean region of Turkey, 148 patients were diagnosed with Pemphigus vulgaris. This accounts for a prevalence of 1.46/100,000 individuals and an annual incidence of 0.24/100,000 individuals. The male to female ratio of 1:1.4 was found. Pemphigus vulgaris (PV) was the most common clinical subtype, identified in 123 patients (83%). The mean age of onset was 43. The findings of the study were in contrast to our findings that our sample of 290 diagnosed patients contain a well-marked male predominance.⁴

However it was not explored whether improvements of symptoms vary by gender. Physicians should be aware that psychological health should be paid attention along with the clinical course of the disease for achieving better outcomes because with improvement in mental health, the clinical severity of the disease will also be improved.

LIMITATIONS

The limitations of this study includes non probability convenience sampling and availability of limited sample. Evaluation of patients over a long time can better guide regarding the clinical outcome of these patients.

CONCLUSION





We can conclude that patients suffering from Pemphigus vulgaris have high prevalence of underlying depression. It highlights the fact that dermatologists, who are dealing with these patients are in a unique position to prevent rapid increase of depression in these patients with a multidisciplinary approach and timely referrals.

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Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society

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