

Prevalence of Scabies Among Rural Children in Kashmir

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Abstract

Background: Scabies is a worldwide contagious skin disease.

Aim: This study aims to estimate the prevalence of scabies amongst children of a rural community.

Methods: This was a cross-sectional descriptive study conducted over a period two months. Children were selected from different schools and households with a total of 3000.

Results: Scabies prevalence was 4.4% in the study group.

Conclusion: Scabies remains a significant public health problem. Regular screenings and periodic health education programs for children and their parents promoting health awareness and attitudes are of prime importance.

Keywords: Rural; Scabies; Prevalence.

INTRODUCTION

Scabies is a contagious skin infestation that spreads by direct and indirect contact, affecting several million people, causing an increase in new cases each year¹. It is a global disease that can occur in both genders, at all ages, in all ethnic groups, and at all socioeconomic levels².

It is a condition that affects families, particularly young children as they are one of the most vulnerable group, followed by older children and young adults³. The primary contributing factors to contracting scabies appear to be poor living conditions, coupled with bad hygiene with a complex relationship between these factors⁴. A person's nutritional status has been reported as a significant risk factor in a scabies outbreak, and malnutrition may predispose individuals to crusted scabies⁵. A WHO report, which collated data from 18 prevalence studies conducted between 1971 and 2001, reported scabies prevalence ranging from 0.2% to 24% with cyclical epidemics occurring at intervals of 10 to 15 years⁶.

METHODS

It was a descriptive cross-sectional study, conducted in a rural community in Srinagar. The study was conducted during April 2018. The structured questionnaire designed and pretested. It had following points:

- i. Socioeconomic data, which included: age, gender, number of family members sharing the same room, level of education and the occupation of both parents.
- ii. Clinical diagnosis via general examination, history taking and clinical local examination for signs of scabies.

A child was considered to have scabies, if two of the following requirements were fulfilled: pruritus which intensified at night, presence of the lesions for >2 weeks, and at least one more family member with similar lesions.

DATA ENTRY AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data was collected, coded and analyzed using SPSS software (Version 20) on Windows 7, and a simple descriptive analysis in the form of means and standard

deviations was calculated for numerical data.

RESULTS

Out of total 3000 Children examined, 140 students had scabies yielding a prevalence of 4.67%

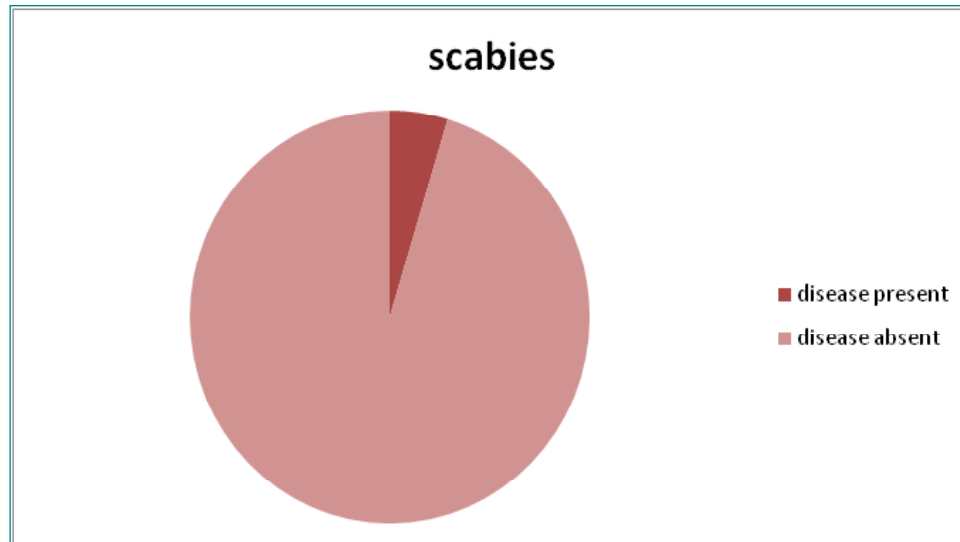


Figure 1. Showing prevalence of Scabies

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Scabies is a globally neglected public health problem in spite of its huge burden from secondary complication, in the most susceptible vulnerable group, children. Scabies is a contagious skin infestation that spreads by direct and indirect contact, affecting several million people, causing an increase in new cases each year. It is a global disease that can occur in both genders, at all ages, in all ethnic groups, and at all socioeconomic levels. It is a condition that affects families, particularly young children as they are one of the most vulnerable group, followed by older children and young adults. The primary contributing factors to contracting scabies appear to be poor living conditions, coupled with bad hygiene with a complex relationship between these factors.

Scabies remains a significant public health problem; it is common in childhood and affects populations from different social levels. Although scabies is a common disease, its diagnosis could be challenging and difficult to establish. Regular screening of children by doctors, especially during the seasonal spread of the disease and ensuring the availability of drugs for thorough treatment of all family members to ensure complete cure and recovery from the disease.

Our results revealed that the prevalence of scabies was 4.8%. Comparable findings reported by⁷ showed the prevalence in Egyptian primary schools (Kafr el-Sheikh) was 4.4% and likewise for Sohag⁸. A high prevalence rate of 10.16% was reported amongst Indian children, which may also be the result of a high density overcrowded population⁹

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