

The psychosocial effect in patients with tinea infection

Daniel Henry¹, David Henry¹, Dennis Henry¹

1. Usha memorial Skin, Eye and Dental clinic, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, India.

Dear Editor,

As dermatologists in Southeast Asia, we are treating a lot of patients with tinea infections and often steroid-modified tinea and extensive tinea. We find that there is a lack of awareness in patients of fungal infection, and they often tend to use the topical over-the-counter drugs, which are a combination of steroid and antifungal drugs. They keep using it for prolonged periods of time, 2 to 3 months or more. Then in these cases we can also find the side effects of topical steroids like atrophy, growth of hairs over the area of application, telangiectasia, etc. Any chronic dermatological condition produces a profound psychological and social impact on the patient.¹

The patients of extensive tinea corporis have a really low dermatological quality of life index. According to Henry et al., quality of life was most affected in patients with tinea infections.² Due to the use of steroids, the clinical picture of tinea changes, and often the patient has an altered clinical picture.³ Patients may experience a lot of emotional distress, like depression, low self-esteem, social discrimination, and frustration due to their diseased condition. Chronic extensive tinea infections can hamper the daily routine. Itching in the workplace can bring embarrassment, especially for female patients.

The cost of treatment is a big problem for poor patients and for the patients where 2 or 3 family members are infected together. It creates a huge financial burden for the patients.

So it is necessary to counsel the patients of tinea infections and provide treatment according to the buying capacity of the patient, as the treatment often lasts for a longer period of time. Counseling patients about dos and don'ts in tinea is very necessary. Treating a case of tinea successfully can bring a smile to the face of the patient but can also bring immense joy to the treating dermatologist.

References

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