Occupational hand dermatitis among hairdressers in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Hairdressing is one of the occupations that have been identified as high risk for occupational hand dermatitis. Skin diseases such as hand dermatitis can impact quality of life to an extent that can be compared to life threatening conditions such as heart disease.

Aims and objectives: To determine the prevalence of occupational hand dermatitis among hairdressers at the Ikota shopping complex, VGC Lagos, to describe the range of activities carried out by the hairdressers and to determine the risk factors for development of hand dermatitis among the hairdressers.

Methodology: The design of the study was cross-sectional and all the hairdressers working at the Ikota shopping complex, VGC Lagos were included in the study. The data collection instrument was an adapted version of the NOSQ-2002. Data was analysed using the SPSS package.

Results: A total of 171 respondents participated in the study, 7 (4.1%) males and 164 (95.9%) females. Mean age was 25.9 years (SD 7.62). Fifty-eight (33.9%) were apprentices, while 113 (66.1%) were qualified hairdressers. The lifetime prevalence of hand dermatitis was 21.6% and one year prevalence 17.5%. The prevalence of occupational hand dermatitis (those that improved away from work) was lifetime prevalence 14.6% and one year prevalence 11%. The major activities carried out are: relaxing of hair 121 (70.8%), washing and setting 122 (71.3%), braiding 102 (59.6%), weaving 63 (36.8%) and fixing of hair extensions 109 (63.7%). The risk factors for hand dermatitis found to statistically significant were: hair relaxers (p=0.001), atopic dermatitis (p=0.000), hay fever (p=0.000), eye allergy (p=0.001) and frequent hand washing of over 20 times per day (p=0.013).

Conclusion: Hand dermatitis occurs commonly among the hairdressers studied. Atopy, allergy, hay fever, relaxers and frequent hand washing are significantly associated with the development of hand dermatitis.