Assessing the impact of childhood scleroderma on physical function and quality of life

EM Baldham1, Holly Ennis2, Ariane L Herrick2, Alice Chieng3, Helen Foster4, Lindsay Shaw3, Helen L Richards6.
1Alder Hey Children’s NHS Foundation Trust, Liverpool, UK 2arc Epidemiology Unit, University of Manchester, UK 3Booth Hall Children’s Hospital, Manchester, UK 4Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle, UK 5Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, Bath, UK 6Mercy University Hospital, Cork, Ireland.

BACKGROUND

・Childhood scleroderma represents a rare and poorly understood spectrum of conditions and can be either localised or systemic.

・Few studies have assessed quality of life and physical function in childhood scleroderma.

・Quality of life measures are likely to be used in the future as part of a composite assessment to measure disease activity and estimate disease impact.

AIMS

・This cross-sectional study aimed to describe quality of life and physical function in childhood scleroderma in relation to clinical and demographic characteristics.

METHOD

・Recruitment at 4 UK hospitals: Alder Hey Children’s Hospital, Liverpool; Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle; Booth Hall Children’s Hospital, Manchester; Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, Bath.

・Children with either localised scleroderma or systemic sclerosis (SSc) attending paediatric rheumatology clinics invited to participate.

・Children, together with their parents/guardians, completed 3 validated paper-and-pencil measures (outlined in Figure 6):
  • Child Health Questionnaire (CHQ-PF50)
  • Children’s Dermatology Life Quality Index (CDLQI)
  • Child Health Assessment Questionnaire (CHAQ).

・Clinical and demographic data were provided by consultant paediatric rheumatologists using modified Paediatric Rheumatology European Society (PRES) forms.

RESULTS

・28 children participated, together with their parents/guardians. Table 1 shows the demographic profile, CHAQ and CDLQI scores for the sample.

Table 1. Demographic profile of sample with CDLQI and CHAQ scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total sample n = 28</th>
<th>Localised scleroderma n = 24</th>
<th>SSc n = 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female, n(%)</td>
<td>19 (68)</td>
<td>15 (63)</td>
<td>4 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Caucasian, n(%)</td>
<td>24 (85)</td>
<td>20 (87)</td>
<td>4 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at assessment, median (range) years</td>
<td>13 (5-17)</td>
<td>13 (5-17)</td>
<td>11.7 (7-14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease duration, median (range) months</td>
<td>30 (2-135)</td>
<td>22 (2-265)</td>
<td>68 (20-83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAQ physical function score, median (range), 0-3</td>
<td>0.1 (0-1.5)</td>
<td>0 (0-1.5)</td>
<td>0.8 (0-1-1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAQ VAS pain score, median (range), 0-100</td>
<td>15 (0-85)</td>
<td>0 (0-85)</td>
<td>12.5 (10-55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDLQI total score, median (range), 0-30</td>
<td>5 (0-10)</td>
<td>5 (0-10)</td>
<td>3 (0-6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

・Strong correlation between CHAQ physical function and VAS pain assessments (shown in Figure 3) p<0.001.

・Median CHAQ-PF50 scores suggest only moderate impairment with greater impairment in ratings of general health, behaviour, pain and family activity (shown in Figure 4).

・Children with localised scleroderma had lower median scores in psychosocial (eg self-esteem) domains than physical domains, while the reverse was true for SSc.

・Lower self-esteem assessments significantly associated with CHAQ function and pain scores (p=0.04 and p=0.03 respectively).

CONCLUSIONS

・Scleroderma had a moderate impact on quality of life and physical function within this sample, as measured by 3 validated questionnaires.

・Localised scleroderma had a more detrimental impact on psychosocial than on physical wellbeing.

・A reduction in physical function was associated with impaired self-esteem.

Figure 3. CHAQ function scores and VAS pain assessment in localised scleroderma and SSc.

Figure 4. CHQ-PF50 scores by domain (0-100 scale, with 100 = no impairment)