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Abstract

Dermatological screening of an elderly population: the Rotterdam Study

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Background

The recent WHO burden of disease project showed that the non-fatal skin disease related burden is high, but also that prevalence rates of many common skin diseases are not well documented. The aim of this study is to give an overview of (untreated) skin diseases in a population based sample of elderly.

Methods

In 2010, a full body skin examination (FBSE) was embedded in the Rotterdam Study, a prospective population based cohort study of an elderly white-skinned population in the Netherlands. The examination was conducted by a dermatology-trained physician and focused on most common skin diseases (e.g. skin (pre)malignancies, eczema, psoriasis, seborrheic dermatitis, varicose veins). Age- and sex-adjusted standardized prevalence rates (PR) were calculated per 100,000 persons aged 50 years or older, standardized to the World Standard Population 2000.

Results

In total, 5,365 participants with a median age of 67.2 (range: 52-99) were examined and 2,462 had a skin condition (45.9%, PR male: 48,519/100,000, female: 33,442/100,000), including 218 (4.1%) participants with one or more cutaneous malignancies (BCC: 136, SCC: 10, melanoma: 8, mycosis fungoides: 1, without histological confirmation: 63), 1,399 (26.1%) with (multiple) actinic keratosis, 411 (7.7%) with eczema, 175 (3.3%) with psoriasis and 713 (13.3%) with seborrheic dermatitis. Several differences were found between men and woman, e.g. in cutaneous malignancies (PR male: 4,305/100,000, female: 2,825/100,000) and actinic keratosis (PR male: 23,338/100,000, female: 13,610/100,000). In addition to skin diseases, 1466 (27.3%) participants had clinical varicose veins.

Conclusion

During FBSE of this elderly population, a high proportion of elderly had a skin diagnosis.