



ATOPIC ECZEMA/DERMATITIS

ATOPIC DERMATITIS – IS BARRIER FUNCTION DEFECT THE MAIN CULPRIT?

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Introduction: Atopic dermatitis is a chronic relapsing inflammatory disorder that affects all age groups. Abnormal Transepidermal water loss (TEWL) is the major pathogenic mechanism put forward in the recent years. There is no reliable Indian data supporting this theory.

Objective: Our aim was to check whether TEWL is affected in Atopic dermatitis or not.

Material and methods: A hospital based comparative cross-sectional study was conducted. 25 patients suffering from Atopic dermatitis and 25 age and sex match normal controls who were not on any systemic or topical therapy for last 6 weeks were included in the study and their TEWL was evaluated on flexor aspect of right forearm. TEWL was calculated using Tewameter TM300 probe of Courage and Khazaka, Cologne, Germany.

Result: Statistical analysis was done using Fisher's exact test. TEWL was abnormal in 5 patients (20%) and 0 patients (0%) in control group. The difference is not statistically significant ($p=0.05$).

Conclusion: Our results are in contradiction to the popular notion that TEWL is the primary parameter affected in Atopic dermatitis. We believe that barrier defect may not be the main culprit in atopic dermatitis. Immune dysfunction or genetic susceptibility might be more central to the pathogenesis of atopic dermatitis.

