



ATOPIC ECZEMA/DERMATITIS

INTRODUCTION OF “ATOPIC DERMATITIS-SPECTRUM DISORDER”: INCLUSION OF PHENOTYPIC SUBTYPES TO BROADEN THERAPEUTIC REACH

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Background: Dermatology has seen remarkable development of medications for patients with psoriasis, and it appears similar therapeutic advancements are coming for atopic dermatitis (AD). While we're hopeful that these advances will benefit long-suffering AD patients, it's not only those who meet the strict criteria for atopic dermatitis who may benefit.

A similar categorical confinement occurred in psychiatry with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and related diseases. While OCD patients benefited from therapeutic advancements, those with related diseases did not. The term “obsessive compulsive spectrum disorder” was thus created to include these related diseases and allow new therapeutic reach. Dermatology can follow a similar therapeutic extension for patients with eczematous dermatoses who do not explicitly meet the criteria for atopic dermatitis.

Objective: To introduce the term “Atopic Dermatitis Spectrum Disorder” and define its phenotypic subtypes. To define the reach of inclusivity, we investigate conditions related to, and secondary manifestations of, AD as well as identify special populations.

Materials and Methods: We searched the relevant literature for conditions related to eczema, prurigo, atopic dermatitis, and lichen simplex chronicus.

Results: The analysis revealed 21 conditions related to and secondary to eczematous dermatoses. Within these identified conditions, we also established special populations.

Conclusions: It is tragic to see patients unable to receive treatment when there are possible therapeutic options. For those who suffer from eczematous dermatoses, it is unlikely that medications are going to be developed for each subtype or secondary manifestation. If we can consider diversity in presentation as well as diversity among patient populations, then clinicians, developers and payers can reach beyond the single diagnosis. Similar to the successful precedent in psychiatry, this appreciation can benefit a great number of patients who suffer from confining categorizations.

