



ATOPIC ECZEMA/DERMATITIS

## STEROID PHOBIA IN PAEDIATRIC PATIENTS WITH ATOPIC DERMATITIS

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**Introduction:** Atopic dermatitis is a very common and chronically relapsing dermatitis that can cause significant distress to patients and physicians. Topical corticosteroids and emollients are well-researched therapeutic options for this condition. Despite this, topical steroid phobia remains to be a pervasive and worldwide phenomenon that poses negative impact to patient adherence to treatment and leading to poor control.

**Objectives:** To assess the prevalence of steroid phobia amongst patients, parents or care takers in the treatment of Atopic Dermatitis.

**Materials and Method:** This was a prospective questionnaire-based single center study on 95 patients seen at the children's outpatient section of KK Women's and Children's Hospital in Singapore. Steroid phobia was assessed and some known adverse events that patients are most concerned about. Descriptive analysis and was done on the other treatment utilized and sources of steroid information known to the responders.

**Results:** Ninety-five responses were obtained in this study. Topical steroid phobia was observed in 65 (68.4%) patient-guardian responders. Negative effect on the immune system and the formation of stretch marks were the identified major reasons for steroid phobia in this patient population. Other significant predictors of steroid phobia occurrence include previous negative experience with topical steroids, second hand information from previous topical steroid users and self-researches from the world wide web.

**Conclusions:** Steroid phobia is a barrier to management of atopic dermatitis. Our study highlights the contributing factors to steroid phobia, which could guide providers when a therapeutic decision for topical steroid is made and counseling is performed.

