



EPIDEMIOLOGY

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF DRY SKIN IN THE GENERAL POPULATION

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Introduction: Xerosis is a frequent and multifaceted condition which can be associated with skin irritation, itch, discomfort and manifest skin disease. In spite of being frequent, little is known about the epidemiology of dry skin in the population.

Objective: The objective of the study is to determine the prevalence of dry skin in the German adult population.

Material & Methods: Data of 48,630 employed persons were assessed on cross-sectional level in whole body examinations by experienced dermatologists during company-based skin screenings conducted in 343 German companies. Next to the current dermatologic findings and concurrent dermatological diagnoses, age, gender, allergies, atopic diseases and the skin type were assessed. Grading for dry skin was based on clinical evaluation.

Results: In total, n = 14,300 persons (29.4%) were clinically rated as having xerotic skin. Older age was associated with xerosis, ranging from 16.7% in the youngest age group (16-19 years) to 38.4% in the group 60-70 years. No gender specific differences were observed. In the regression analyses controlling for age and gender, dry skin was a significant predictor for: Axillary dermatitis (OR 4.51; CI 2.70-7.54), atopic eczema (OR 3.99; CI 3.42-4.65), excoriation eczema (OR 2.96; CI 2.40-3.65), psoriasis (OR 1.57; CI 1.38-1.78), plantar warts (OR 1.42; CI 1.26-1.60), seborrheic dermatitis (OR 1.28; CI 1.16-1.42), and atopic disposition (OR 1.17; CI 1.12-1.22).

Conclusions: Dry skin is a frequent condition in the adult general population and needs special attention. Association with eczema and atopy has been known for long. However, there are more associated skin conditions in particular in elder persons. Knowing risk factors may facilitate identifying patients at risk for deterioration.

