



EPIDEMIOLOGY

PREVALENCE AND DERMATOLOGICAL COMORBIDITY OF VITILIGO IN GERMANY - A DUAL POPULATION-BASED APPROACH

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Introduction: Most of epidemiological data on vitiligo either refer to strongly selected environments like hospital populations or focus on the prevalence of comorbidity of persons affected from vitiligo without associating the general public.

Objective: Aim of the study was to gain robust representative prevalence data on vitiligo and associated comorbidity in the German adult population.

Material & Methods: A dual population-based approach was applied: 1) Primary data from persons of the working general population. 2) Claims data gathered from a large German statutory health insurance company. Data extraction was conducted using in- and outpatient diagnosis (ICD – 10) for vitiligo (L80) and for the comorbid diseases of interest.

Results: In the 121,783 persons examined in the dermatological screenings (57% male; mean age 43 years) the prevalence of vitiligo was 0.77% (0.84% in men; 0.67% in women). In the claims data (38% male; mean age 46 years) prevalence was 0.17% (0.14% in men; 0.18% in women). In both cohorts, prevalence was predicted by higher age and being male. Further predictors in the occupational cohort were fair skin type, concurrence of naevus flammeus and non-concurrence of acne and lentigo. In the claims data vitiligo was associated with a variety of conditions, e.g. atopic dermatitis, psoriasis or alopecia areata.

Conclusions: The resulting discrepancy of claims vs. primary data between 0.17% and 0.77% indicates the most probable spectrum of vitiligo prevalence in Germany. It is more frequently observed in clinical exams than recorded in claims data, indicating a marked proportion of persons seeking no medical help. Such non-attendance may result from the fact that many treatment options do not provide satisfying benefits to the patients.

