GENETICS AND GENODERMATOSES

PATTERN OF CUTANEOUS MALIGNANCIES AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH OCULOCUTANEOUS ALBINISM IN ANAMBRA STATE NIGERIA-A PARADIGM SHIFT?

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INTRODUCTION: Albinos account for a high percentage of individuals with skin cancers in Nigeria. They are particularly susceptible to cutaneous malignancies such as squamous cell carcinomas (SCC), basal cell carcinomas (BCC) and rarely Melanomas.
Globally, it has been established that BCCs are the commonest cutaneous malignancies among Caucasians followed by SCCs and melanomas. Most older retrospective studies on Albinos in Africa have suggested that squamous cell carcinomas accounted for a higher prevalence (3-6 times) of the skin cancers, followed by BCCs. Cutaneous melanoma has been consistently documented to be rare in all of these reports. However, BCCs have been noted to occur at an increasing frequency in a recent report suggesting a possibility of a similar trend as seen in Caucasians.
This study explores the pattern of cutaneous malignancies in a cross section of albinos in a region of high prevalence of oculocutaneous albinism.

OBJECTIVE: To determine the pattern of cutaneous malignancies in Albinos.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: A cross sectional study involving ninety one individuals with oculocutaneous albinism from the Albino foundation Anambra state. Malignant dermatoses were characterized clinically (skin examination and Dermoscopy). Biopsies from fifty eight tissue samples in thirty consenting albinos were carried out to confirm diagnosis.

RESULTS: The median age of albinos with skin cancers was 39 years with an equal gender distribution. Skin cancers were characterized in 20.98% of all albinos. There were 18 (60%) histologically confirmed malignant lesions all of which were NMSCs; SCC/BCC ratio was 1.0: 2.3. No skin malignancy was noted in participants less than 18 years of age. There was no cutaneous melanoma.

CONCLUSION: This study shows that BCCs occurs more frequently than SCCs in the albinos than previously documented, suggesting a similar pattern with Caucasians.

KEY WORDS:
Oculocutaneous albinism. Cutaneous malig