



GLOBAL SKIN HEALTH

PRESCRIBED & UNPRESCRIBED USE OF TOPICAL CORTICOSTEROIDS: WHAT LIES AHEAD? A CROSS-SECTIONAL, SURVEY BASED STUDY

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Background: There is scarce scientific data Topical Corticosteroids(TCS) prescription by non-dermatologists including registered medical practitioners, ayurvedic, homeopathic practitioners and over the counter use of topical corticosteroids containing creams.

Objective: The main objective of this study is to analyze the prescription and usage pattern of topical steroids in general population. To study buying behavior of general population while using over the counter creams for skin disease.

Material and methods: An open, cross-sectional, duration-based study of 3 months. Inclusion criteria: Patients with history of topical steroid application; either prescribed or purchased over the counter or used by the patients themselves. Exclusion criteria: Patients who were not willing to give informed consent. Patient's data like Socio-demographic profiles; duration, frequency, site of application, contents of the topical cream used, prescriber information and patients' desire to continue the use of topical steroids were recorded.

Results: Total of 22.01% (n=601) patients were already using cream containing topical corticosteroids at time of presentation to the tertiary dermatology care center. The study shows that in almost half of the patients 47.75% were using unprescribed topical corticosteroids. Registered medical practitioners were the most common source of Topical Corticosteroid creams prescription (60.19%) in the prescribed group. Clobetasol Propionate was 49.75% Most common steroid agent. Genitalia & perineum where the most common body site over which topical corticosteroids were applied (40.83%). 503 (83.69%) bought/were prescribed such creams for suspected fungal infection.

Conclusion: The study reveals unrestricted sale of creams containing corticosteroids in a developing country. Such inadvertent application leads to a complex of dermatological presentation known as 'Topical steroid damage skin' in hyper-endemic proportions.





Key words: Over-the-counter (OTC), Topical Steroid Damaged Skin, Prescription practice

