INFECTIOUS DISEASES (BACTERIAL, FUNGAL, VIRAL, PARASITIC, INFESTATIONS)

GLOBAL CONSENSUS DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR SCABIES

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Introduction: Scabies affects 200 million people globally, and was added to the list of WHO neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in 2017. There is no standardised test method and diagnostic methods used in trials and epidemiological research vary widely.

Objective: We aimed to develop consensus criteria for the diagnosis of scabies.

Materials and methods: We conducted an iterative, consensus (Delphi) study involving international experts in the diagnosis of scabies. Panel members were recruited through expression of interest and targeted invitation of known experts from a range of global settings. The Delphi study consisted of four rounds of anonymous surveys, moving from generation and ranking a long list of possible features (rounds 1 - 2), to development and refinement of a series of draft criteria (rounds 3 – 4).

Results: Panel participants (n=34) were highly experienced clinicians, representing a range of clinical settings and all continents. Based on initial rounds, a draft set of criteria were developed, incorporating three levels of diagnostic certainty – Confirmed Scabies, Clinical Scabies and Suspected Scabies. In the final round, there was a very high level of agreement (>90%) for all levels of criteria and subcategories. Adoption of the criteria was supported by 96.4% of panel members.

Conclusions: Consensus criteria for the diagnosis of scabies have been established with very high agreement. Formal validation has now commenced. Detailed definitions for criteria, instructions on implementation and a library of images have been developed to support training and use of the new criteria.