



QUALITY OF LIFE, QUALITY OF CARE, AND PATIENT SAFETY

THE EFFECT OF ATOPIC DERMATITIS ON THE FAMILY QUALITY OF LIFE AT A DERMATOLOGY CLINIC IN NIGERIA

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Introduction: Atopic dermatitis (AD) is a chronic inflammatory skin disease which occurs during childhood. It has dramatic effects on the quality of life of afflicted children and their parents. AD not only produces physical symptoms for the child; but also causes emotional abnormalities and social dysfunction. Caring for children affected by chronic skin diseases is a task that requires a significant degree of family involvement.

Objective: To identify if treating children with AD improves family quality of life and identify potential predictors

Materials and Methods: This was a prospective cohort study carried out over 6 months involving consecutively consenting parents/care givers of children with AD (≤ 15 years) attending the Dermatology clinic of Lagos University Teaching Hospital. The Dermatitis Family Impact Questionnaire (DFI) was administered to parents/carers.

Results: Sixty-eight families completed the DFI questionnaire and majority of forms were filled by mothers (56; 82.4%). Among the children with AD there were 39 girls (57.4%) and 29 boys (42.6%); mean age of the children with AD was 5.13 ± 3.75 years with majority of the children (43; 63.2%) aged 1-5 years.

The domains mostly affecting the family were expenditure (54.4%); emotional distress (54.4%) and sleep (48.5%); those that least affected them were family leisure (79.4%), relationship with carer (70.5%) and food preparation (67.6%). A poor score ($> 50\%$) was recorded by 28 (41.2%) of the respondents.

Conclusions: Family QoL among parents of children with AD is significantly impaired. The effect of AD on the social and emotional functioning of families is vital, as parental involvement is key in AD management for children. The impact of atopic dermatitis on the family quality of life needs to be documented as it can provide the basis for advocacy for appropriate resources and a holistic approach for management of this condition in our environment.

