

QUALITY OF LIFE, QUALITY OF CARE, AND PATIENT SAFETY

## TOPICAL CORTICOSTEROID ABUSE OF FACE: THE MAGNITUDE AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS

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**Introduction:** Desire to have fair skin is deep rooted in Indian society. It compels the vulnerable section of the society to look for short cut to get the fairer skin while compromising safety.

**Objectives:** To determine the proportion of cases with topical corticosteroid (TCS) abuse of face and to describe the associated factors.

**Materials and Methods:** A validated semistructured questionnaire based interview of patients attending dermatology clinic was conducted over a period of two months in a tertiary care teaching hospital. TCS usage of inappropriate potency, without prescription, for wrong indications and/ or for more than one month was defined as abuse. The data were entered and analysed using EpiData Analysis v2.2.2 183.m

**Results:** Among 540 patients interviewed, 52.7% were males and 42.3% were females. Average age was  $37.72 \pm 17.34$  years. The proportion of TCS abuse was 13.15% (71/540). The youngest patient with TCS abuse was 1 year and eldest was 72 year. Both genders abused TCS equally. The factors associated with TCS abuse were skilled workers (Relative Risk (RR)=2.2) and age group of 22-45 years (63.4%, RR=2.8). Commonly abused TCS classes were high potent in 29.57%, medium potent in 30.98%, mid potent in 38.02% and low potent in 1.4% of cases. TCS were advised by friends in 43.66%, doctors in 32.39%, neighbours in 16.90% and pharmacist in 7.04% of cases. TCS were advised for dark spots in 57.74%, fairness in 16.90%, and acne in 16.90% of patients. Only 4.22% of cases were advised for steroid indicated dermatoses. The mean duration of usage was 5.9 (1-48) months. Adverse effects were noted in 53.5%. Majority of patients (93%) were not aware of adverse effects.

**Conclusion:** TCS abuse of face was present in 1 in 10 patients. It was associated with age and occupation. Friends and neighbours influence the usage of TCS.