



TROPICAL DERMATOLOGY

SKIN CANCER IN TIGRAY REGION (ETHIOPIA)

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Introduction: between 2 and 3 million non-melanoma skin cancers and over 130,000 malignant melanomas occur globally each year. Skin tumours in dark-skinned African people is believed to be infrequent, but there are very little data available concerning the actual prevalence and incidence of skin neoplasm in this population. In general, skin cancer is uncommon in people with dark skin when compared to so-called "Caucasian".

Objective: To evaluate the incidence and prevalence of all forms of skin cancer observed at the Italian Dermatological Center (IDC) in Mekelle and at the Maiani District Hospital (MDH) in Sheraro, Tigray Region, in twelve years of clinical-scientific activity.

Materials and Methods: from January 2006 to December 2017 at the Italian Dermatological Centre (IDC) in Mekele and at Maiani District Hospital (MDH) in Sheraro, in Tigray Region (Ethiopia), 66,927 patients (inpatients and outpatients) with skin diseases have been examined by a team of dermatologists from San Gallicano Dermatological Institute of Rome (Italy). Most of the patients (61%) were in the age bracket of 16 to 35 years.

Results: the records revealed 2,718 patients presented 2,986 skin tumours. Among these, 746 (4.06%) were malignant tumours of the skin and the mucous membranes. Unlike among people of European descent, for whom basal cell carcinoma (BCC) is most common, squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) is the most frequent type of non-melanoma skin cancer among our patients making up 40 % of all cases of skin neoplasm.

Conclusion: in our experience cutaneous malignant tumours appear related to trauma (previous burn scar, chronic leg ulcers, leishmaniasis scar), infections (STIs). In our patients Skin Cancer is often associated with increased morbidity and mortality. Differences in survival rates may be attributed to skin cancers being diagnosed at a more advanced stage, and socioeconomic factors.

