



URTICARIA, ANGIOEDEMA

THE DETERMINANTS OF URTICARIA IN LEBANON: A CASE-CONTROL STUDY

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Introduction: Urticaria affects the quality of life and poses socioeconomic burdens on affected individuals. Available epidemiological studies are scarce, often with several limitations and biases. The epidemiological profile of urticaria in Lebanon is unknown, warranting the conduction of this study to identify urticaria determinants in Lebanon.

Materials and methods: This is a case-control study conducted from March 2017 through March 2018. Dermatologists were recruited from several Lebanese hospitals across all regions to complete questionnaires addressing multiple variables in patients with urticaria. For each included case, four controls presenting with other skin conditions were recruited by the same physician. Descriptive and bivariate analyses (X² test and t-test) were conducted, followed by a multivariate analysis of the statistically significant variables.

Results: Of 435 recruited patients, 87 (20.0%) had urticaria and 348 (80.0%) served as their controls. Bivariate analysis showed significant associations with the area of residence ($p=0.017$), previous history of atopy ($p=0.001$), prior atopic dermatitis ($p=0.0001$), prior allergen testing ($p=0.029$), and prior IgE level measurement with a subsequent high IgE level detection ($p=0.0001$ and 0.001 respectively). However, logistic regression showed that only a positive history of atopy is significantly associated with urticaria (OR=203.044, 95%CI 1.38; 29729.12; $p<0.05$).

Conclusion: This is the first study addressing the demographic determinants of urticaria in Lebanon. No significant association was found between urticaria and several of its previously regarded risk factors, possibly due to our small sample size and inclusion of dermatologists only. Overall, only an atopic history significantly correlated with urticaria development in our sample.

