

## Histopathological Spectrum of Skin Lesions in the Elderly: Experience from a Tertiary Hospital in Southeast Nigeria

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**Abstract :** Background: There are only a few epidemiological studies published on skin disorders in the elderly within the Nigerian context and none from the Southeast Region of the country. In addition, none of these studies has considered the pattern and frequency of histopathologically diagnosed geriatric skin lesions. Hence, we attempted to determine the frequency as well as the age and gender distributions of histologically diagnosed dermatological diseases in the geriatric population from skin biopsies submitted to the histopathology department of a tertiary care hospital in Southeast Nigeria. Material and methods: This is a cross-sectional retrospective hospital-based study involving all skin biopsies of patients 60 years and above, received at the Department of Histopathology, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital, Nnewi, Nigeria from January 2004 to December 2019. Results: During the study period, 751 skin biopsies were received in the histopathology department. Of these, 142 were from patients who were older than 60 years. Thus, the overall share of geriatric patients was 18.9%. The mean age at presentation was  $71.1 \pm 8.6$  years. The M: F was 1:1 and most of the patients belonged to the age group of 60–69 years (69 cases, 48.6%). The mean age of the male patients was  $72.1 \pm 9.5$  years. In the female patients, it was  $70.1 \pm 7.5$  years. The commonest disease category was neoplasms (91, 64.1%). Most neoplasms were malignant. There were 67/142 (47.2%) malignant lesions. Commonest was Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) (30 cases) which is 21.1% of all geriatric skin biopsies and 44.8% of malignant skin biopsies. This is closely followed by melanoma (29 cases). Conclusion: Malignant neoplasms, benign neoplasms and papulosquamous disorders are the three commonest histologically diagnosed skin lesions in our geriatric population. The commonest skin malignancies in this group of patients are squamous cell carcinoma and malignant melanoma.

**Keywords :** geriatric, skin, Nigeria, histopathology

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