

Skin Diseases in the Rural Areas in Nepal; Impact on Quality of Life

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Abstract : Introduction: Skin diseases are one of the most common health problems in Nepal. The objectives of this study are to determine the prevalence of skin diseases and impact on quality of life in rural areas in Nepal. Materials and methods: A house-to-house survey was conducted, to obtain socio-demographic data and identify individuals with skin diseases, followed by health camps, where the villagers were examined. A pilot study was conducted in one village, which was then extended to 10 villages in 4 districts. To assess the impact on quality of life, the villagers were interviewed with Skin Disease Disability Index. This is a questionnaire developed and validated by the authors for use in Nepal. Results: In the pilot study, the overall prevalence of skin diseases was 20.1% (645/3207). In the additional 10 villages with 7348 (3651/3787 m/f) inhabitants, 1862 (721/1141 m/f, mean age 31.4 years) had one or more skin diseases. The overall prevalence of skin diseases was 25%. The most common skin disease categories were eczemas (13.7%, percentage among all inhabitants) pigment disorders (6.8%), fungal infections (4.9%), nevi (3.7%) and urticaria (2.9%). These five most common skin disease categories comprise 71% of all skin diseases seen in the study. The mean skin disease disability index score was 13.7, indicating very large impact on the quality of life. Conclusions: This population-based study shows that skin diseases are very common in the rural areas of Nepal and have significant impact on quality of life. Targeted intervention at the primary health care level should help to reduce the health burden due to skin diseases.

Keywords : prevalence and pattern of skin diseases, impact on quality of life, rural Nepal, interventions

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