

RESEARCH ARTICLE

PREVALENCE OF SCABIES CASES IN TWO PUBLIC HOSPITALS ADEN / YEMEN

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Received: 18 November 2022 / Accepted: 18 December 2022 / Published online: 31 December 2022

Abstract

Scabies has become a major public health problem, especially in low resource settings. In this area no previous study regarding scabies prevalence and associated risk factors have been conducted. Therefore, this study was carried. The aim of this study to provide data on the position of scabies with regard to prevalence and the factors related to it and to recommended measures for prevention and control of infestation. A cross-sectional study carried out over a period of 6 months from 1 January to 30 June 2022 in dermatology outpatient clinic of two main teaching hospitals Al-Gamhoria and Al-Wahda, in Aden Government. Out of total of 2575 patients examined, 90 had scabies (3.4%) with highest prevalence rate in children aged 8- 15 years (27.8%). The infection was higher in males than females (57.8 % vs 42.2 %). The present study concludes that poor socio-economic conditions, such as illiteracy, overcrowding and sharing room, joblessness have a statistically significant relation with scabies. In addition, to family history of itchy skin lesions.

Keywords: Scabies, Prevalence, Socio-economic, Aden.

Introduction

Scabies is a neglected contagious skin disease caused by the microscopic mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei* var. *hominis* [1]. The exact number of infected cases worldwide is not known, but is estimated to be up to 300 million [2].

It can cause various problems in different organs and tissues [3-6] and at the mental and social level in sick people in other words, the complication and secondary effects of scabies cause a huge public health burden [7, 8].

Scabies, which is included in the group of neglected tropical diseases by WHO (World Health Organization), is mainly transmitted through direct contact or fomites. Sociodemographic, socioeconomic, biodemographic, and environmental factors are effective in transmission of the parasite [3, 4, 9, 10].

Recognized risk factors of scabies are close contact with an infested relative and acquired immune deficiencies for hyperkeratosis forms [11]. A range of other risk factors have been proposed, most of them being direct or indirect indicators of poverty at the community or infra-community level [12]. However, despite abundant literature on the epidemiology of scabies in developing countries

[2, 12, 13]. The relative importance of the fore mentioned risk factors has been infrequently investigated. Hence, this study was aimed to determine the prevalence of scabies and the factors affecting the scabies disease among patients who applied to the dermatology outpatient clinic of two main teaching hospitals in Aden Yemen.

Methodology:

Study design and setting:

A Hospital based cross-sectional study was conducted with the patients who are attended to the dermatological outpatients clinic in Al-Gamhoria and Al-Wahda teaching hospitals between January to June 2021; Aden Governorate, Yemen.

Study Population:

All patients attended the dermatological department of Al- Gamhorria and Al-Wahda teaching hospitals and suspected as the first diagnosis to have scabies.

Data collection and Tools used:

Socio-demographic characteristics and other related fac-

tors were collected using structured questionnaire by authors. Structured questionnaire was used to interview patients and parents of children in the clinic. Physical examination was undertaken on respondents who had itchy papular skin rash by dermatologist, and experienced doctors.

To ensure quality of data, questionnaire was prepared in English language, translated to Amharic and re translated back to English by other person who can speak both languages. To make sure that the questionnaire is appropriate and understandable; it was pre-tested on 15 patients.

Data analysis:

Data was collected directly from the patients, parents and or relatives by experienced doctors.

Data was done by computerized system entered, coded, cleaned and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15 "SPSS program" and analysis into frequency and percentage distribution that were represented in statistical tables.

The Chi Square test were used, with the level of significance was at or less than 0.5%. In the univariate analysis a descriptive statistics was conducted to explore frequency distribution, central tendency, variability (dispersion) and overall distribution of independent variables.

Ethical considerations:

- The study was approved by "the Committee of Research and Postgraduate Studies, Faculty of Medicine and Health Science, Aden University".
- Oral approval consents were obtained from all patients before enrolling them into the study, after providing them detailed explanation of the objectives, methods, and benefits of the study. The information obtained from the patients were confidentially handled and used only for this research purposes.

Results

Out a total of 2575 patients attended dermatologic out patients of the two main hospitals of Aden governorate, 90 cases (3.4%) suspected scabies. Of this total (57.8%) were males and (42.2%) were females, no statistically significant relation between the sex of the patients and the positive finding of scabies was exist ($df = 1$, $\chi^2 = 0.343$, $P = .558$), the age was ranged from 2-70 years old with mean 21.5 ± 15.9 years old. Age group 8-15 year old was the most prevalent group (27.8%). There is no statistically significant relation between the age group of the patients and the presence of scabies ($df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 0.851$, $P = .932$). The educational level of the fathers and mothers of the patients it was found that the majority of the parents were low educational level (74.4% among patients or parents). There was statistically significant relation between the scabies infestation and the educational

level of both fathers and mothers. The patients in the study were from all districts in Aden, with about 67.7% only from Al- Shaikh Othman and Dar-Saad districts. More than half of them not working either house wife or children Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of patients. Al- Gamhoria and Al-Saddaka teaching hospitals, 2021(N = 90)

Item	No	%
- Sex:		
Male	52	57.8
Female	38	42.2
- Age groups:		
< 8 years old	19	21.1
8 -15 years old	25	27.8
16 – 23 years old	13	14.4
24 – 31 years old	13	14.4
≥ 32 years old	20	22.2
Mean ± SD (Min. – Max.)	21.5 ± 15.9 (2 – 70)	
Educational level of the patients and/or their parents:		
Low educational level	67	74.4
High educational level	23	25.6
- District:		
Seera	14	15.6
Al-Mualla	5	5.6
Al-Tawahi	1	1.1
Al- Shaikh Othman	31	34.4
Al-Buriqua	6	6.7
Dar-Saad	33	36.6
Occupation:		
Not working	65	72.2
Workers	25	27.8

Home and hygienic characteristics of the patients was asked and the results shown in table 2. As we found that (36.7%) of patients living in one rooms was more than 4 persons, there was statistically significant relation between the number of patients living in one room in the home and the family history of scabies ($df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 14.246$, $P = .001$). The number of family members at home different, about 85.6% of the patients their family size 5 members and more. There is a statistically significant relation between the number of persons in the family and the presence of scabies infestation in the family ($df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 21.612$, $P = .000$). The hygienic status of the patients was 94.4% wash daily, there is no statistically significant relation between the frequency of washing among patients and scabies infestation ($df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 0.814$, $P = .665$).

Table 2: Home and hygienic characteristics of the patients. Aden, 2021 (N = 90)

Item	N _i	%
- Number of the persons in one the room at home:		
1-2	32	35.6
3-4	25	27.8
>4	33	36.7
-Number of family members at home:		
Less 5	13	14.4
5 member & more	77	85.6
Mean ± SD (Min. – Max.)	7.3 ± 3.8 (2 – 70)	
- Frequency of washing among patients		
Weekly	1	1.1
Daily	85	94.4
Not regular daily	4	4.4

Patients distribution according to the age group is shown

in table 3 where we classified the patient into two groups up to 15 years (42.2%) and more than 15 years old (57.8%), we found that majority of patients up to 15 were males (31.1%) and those more than 15 majority were females (31.1%). By applying the chi square test to see if there is any statistical relation between the age group and the sex of the patients, it was found that this deference was statistically significant (χ^2 test = 6.821 with 1 df p= 0.009).

Table 4. Show us the relation between numbers of persons in one room in the home and family history of scabies in both age group. It is found that it is statistically significant among group Up to 15 (χ^2 test = 7.833 2df p= 0.020) and at border line for age group more than 15 (χ^2 test = 5.937 2df p= 0.051)

Table 3: Patients distribution according to the age group in relation to sex and family history. Aden, 2021 (N = 90)

Sex		Male	Female	Total
Age		No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
Up to 15		28 (31.1)	10 (11.1)	38 (42.2)
More than 15 Total		24 (26.7)	28 (31.1)	52 (57.8)
Up to 15		52 (57.8)	38 (42.2)	90 (100.0)
χ^2 test = 6.821 1 df p= 0.009				
Age Group	Family history			
Up to 15	Negative	3 (7.9)	4 (10.5)	7 (18.4)
	Positive	25 (65.8)	6 (15.8)	31 (81.6)
	Total	28 (73.7)	10 (26.3)	38 (100.0)
More than 15	Negative	3 (5.8)	2 (3.8)	5 (9.6)
	Positive	21 (40.4)	26 (50.0)	47 (90.4)
	Total	24(46.2)	28 (53.8)	52(100.0)
Up to 15 χ^2 test = 4.205 1df p= 0.040		More than 15 χ^2 test =.427 1df p= 0.514		

Table 4: Patients distribution according to the age group in relation to numbers of persons in one room in the home and family history. Aden, 2021(N = 90)

Age Group	Family history	Number of persons in one Room			
		1-2	3-4	>4	Total
		No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
Up to 15	Negative	6 (15.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.6)	7 (18.4)
	Positive	9 (23.7)	8 (21.1)	14 (36.8)	31 (81.6)
	Total	15 (39.5)	8 (21.1)	15 (39.5)	38 (100.0)
More than 15	Negative	4 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.9)	5 (9.6)
	Positive	13 (25.0)	17 (32.7)	17 (32.7)	47 (90.4)
	Total	17(32.7)	17 (32.7)	18 (34.6)	52 (100.0)
Up to 15 χ^2 test = 7.833 2df p= 0.020		More than 15 χ^2 test = 5.937 2df p= 0.051			

The relation between number of persons in the home and family history of scabies was tested in table 5, and it is

found that it is significant statistically (χ^2 test = 21.612 2df P= 0.000).

Table 5: Patients distribution according to the age group in relation to number of persons in the home and family history. Aden, 2021(N = 90)

Family History	Number of persons			
	Less 5	5-8	> 8	Total
	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
Negative	7 (7.8)	3 (3.3)	2 (2.2)	12 (13.3)
Positive	6 (6.7)	47 (52.2)	25 (27.8)	78 (86.7)
Total	13(14.4)	50 (55.6)	27 (30.0)	90 (100.0)
χ^2 test = 21.612 2df P= 0.000				

female relatives of the patients decrease with increasing the level of education and this relation was not significant statistically among fathers of patients **Up to 15** (χ^2 test = 1.211 1df p=0.27) but it was significant statistically among fathers or patients more than 15 χ^2 test = 7.045 1df P= 0.008 Among mothers it was significant statistically among mother of patients up to 15 (χ^2 test = 9.534 1df P= 0.002) and in the border line with mothers or patients **more than 15** χ^2 test = 3.614 1df P= 0.057

As it is shown in table 6, the family history of male and

Table 6: Educational Level of Patients and Family History. Aden, 2021(N = 90)

		Male Educational Level		
Age Group	Family history	Low Education	High Education	Total
		No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
Up to 15	Negative	4 (10.5%)	3 (7.9)	7(18.4)
	Positive	24 (63.2%)	7 (18.4)	31(81.6)
	Total	28 (73.7%)	10 (26.3)	38(100.0)
More than 15	Negative	2 (3.8%)	3 (5.8)	5(9.6)
	Positive	41(78.8%)	6 (11.5)	47(90.4)
	Total	43 (82.7%)	9 (17.3)	52(100.0)
Up to 15 χ^2 test = 1.211 1df P= 0.27		More than 15 χ^2 test = 7.045 1df P= 0.008		
		Female Educational Level		
Age Group	Family history	Low Education	High Education	Total
		No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
Up to 15	Negative	0 (0.0%)	7 (18.4)	7(18.4)
	Positive	20 (52.6%)	11 (28.9)	31(81.6)
	Total	20 (52.6%)	18 (47.4)	38(100.0)
More than 15	Negative	2 (3.8%)	3 (5.8)	5(9.6)
	Positive	37 (71.2%)	10 (19.2)	47(90.4)
	Total	39 (75.0%)	13 (25.0)	52(100.0)
Up to 15 χ^2 test = 9.534 1df p= 0.002		More than 15 χ^2 test = 3.614 1df p= 0.057		

Discussion:

Epidemiological studies about scabies infestation provide valuable information about the associated risk factors and serve as a basis for selection of prevention methods and control.

According to World Health Organization data the prevalence of scabies ranges from 0.2% to 71%, [14].

In the current study, the overall prevalence of scabies was (3.4%). This finding is aligned with the results of studies done previously in Ethiopia, Iraq and Egypt with a prevalence of 2.5%, 3.3%, and 7% respectively [15-17]. However, it is lower than

studies from Pakistan (38.15%), (47.6%, Nigeria (65.0%), and Ghana (71%) [18-20]. The difference in

prevalence rates could be attributed to the density of population, might be attributed to family size variation, educational status variation, and might also be related to variation in sociodemographic.

In this study, the males were prone to disease more than females (57.8 % vs 42.2%). These results are in agreement with previous study conducted in Hadhramout, Yemen were a prevalence rate among males (71.13%) vs (28.87%) among females [21]. Similarly, in study conducted in Iran, males were 53.1% and 46.9% were females [22]. In a study conducted in Iraq, men were (54.1%) vs (45.9%) were females [23] and in Liberia study also males predominance were reported (13.2% vs 6.9 % respectively [24]. The higher prevalence of scabies

in male has been previously attributed to different life-style, implying greater exposure to potential mite sources e.g. due to more intense social life in the community and the working periods far from their households [25-28].

Whereas, in other study in Iraq, males made up 42% (60 respondents) of the overall population, while females made up 58% (83 respondents) [29]. In the study conducted in rural area of Bareilly, the female represented (13.9 %) while males constituted (10.3 %) [30]. On other hand studies in countries like Nigeria where prevalence of scabies between males and females was equally [31]. The attack rate is probably equal between the sexes, and the differences in prevalence reported in some studies are probably attributable to confounding factors [32].

Scabies is a condition that affects families, particularly the most vulnerable; it is also has the greatest impact on young children. According to the results of this study, the most common age group was 8-15 years (27.8%). This finding in the school-aged children is consistent with the findings of studies conducted in northwest Ethiopia among “Yekolo temeri” which is reported to be (22.5%) [33]. While, in Australian Aboriginal communities, prevalence figures of up to 50% have been reported, and studies in Fiji, Vanuatu and the Solomon islands have found the prevalence of scabies in children to be 18.5%, 24%, and 25%, respectively, with the prevalence being as high as 42% in one Fijian village [34,35]. This might be due to the fact that younger children, particularly, those at school are at high risk of scabies infestations as the school environments may increase the susceptibility of cross-infestation and increase contacts which can be passed to family members and other.

The complex relationships between low socioeconomic status, overcrowding, risk behavior, proportion of individuals infested, and the spread of *S. scabiei* in the developing world have been clearly addressed in the recent literature [27, 36-38].

Regarding family education level there is a statistically significant association between level of education and scabies infestation. The present work was in accordance with study conducted in Indonesia [39] and findings in southeast of Iran [40]. Moreover, Feldmeier and Heukelbach [41], Ursani and Baloch [26] declared that illiteracy and low standard of education are the factors responsible for the distribution of scabies. Various study findings have reported that parents with higher levels of education are more capable to apply healthcare and prevention measures for their children [27, 42-44].

Concerning family size in our study, there is statistically significant associations between family sizes and scabies infestation. This finding is consistent with results of study in Solomon Islands by Mason et al 2016 [45]. In addition, this result is also supported by other studies conducted in Southern of Ethiopia and Southeast Iran,

[15, 40] which revealed that family size had significant association with scabies infestation.

Crowded living conditions, in particular overcrowding for sleeping space, and sleeping habits have been important contributory risk factors for scabies [46, 47, 48].

In the overcrowded homes, close contact between family members increase the risk of scabies transmission. Still, the risk of transmission increases in crowded living conditions, resource-limited regions, child-care facilities, group homes, and institutional settings (e.g., long-term care facilities, prisons, etc [49]. Studies from Mali, India, Brazil and northern Australia all show an association with overcrowding, especially sleeping quarters [35, 50, 51]. Our finding also detected this fact.

The presence of having family member with history of itch skin lesions were significantly associate with scabies infestation in this study. This finding is aligned with the results for example of Debe Worku et al. (2020), Dagne et al. (2018) in study conducted in Northwest Ethiopia [10, 52]. This might be due to the fact that family members spend sufficient time together for the scabies mite to be transferred to the healthy member of family and the most efficient mechanism of scabies transmission is through direct skin reflecting the fundamental role of physical contact in person – to person transmission.

As regard residence, the majority of patients were from AL-shaik Othman and Dar-Saad district areas with a prevalence of 71%. These are districts condensed with people. This is in similarity with the finding in Brazil, where scabies was twice as prevalent in a densely populated urban slum as in a rural community where families lived in larger space [51].

The relationship between socio-economic condition and scabies infection is complex. This study shows that a rise in the unemployment rate was associated with a higher incidence rate of scabies. Similarly, in study conducted in Poland (2019), the authors emphasized that unemployment is effective on scabies, in a study conducted in Turkey, Ural et al. (2022) demonstrated also that scabies was more common in non-working than in working [53, 54]. Unemployment is a situation that is expected to affect the socioeconomic status of the family, and therefore, the health, nutrition, housing, etc. of the individuals in the family

The role of hygiene is controversial [55]. Our results in this study was in agreements with studies reported that the prevalence of scabies was not influenced by personal hygiene [56, 57]. On contrast to studies conducted in Nigeria, and Bangladesh, which revealed an association between scabies infestation and frequency of bath is existed [19, 27]. Other studies also have confirmed that the prevalence of human scabies is linked with poor personal hygiene [58-59].

Limitations of the study:

The major limitation of the study is that diagnosis was entirely based on clinical assessment conducted by experienced doctors and dermatologist, with no mite visualization or its products techniques used to confirm the diagnosis by skin scraping. Second, the dermatoscopy, was not used as this was a pragmatic field survey and these tool is usually not available in clinical practice. These with an agreement with recent consensus criteria for diagnosis of scabies recommended a standardized clinical approach for these settings [60]. Also, we don't ask about sharing of pillows and sharing of clothes, bedding, and dealing with animals.

Conclusion

Though frequency of disease is low in study area. The authors, ensure that the percentage of patient is not reflect the real incidence in the Governorate because other patients consult other private health care centers. Low socioeconomic status including educational level, big family size, crowding in one room and in addition, to presence of a family member with lesion were important factors for transmission of scabies.

Recommendation

Implementation of appropriate educational programs, improvement of socioeconomic conditions and treat scabies cases along with all those to whom they have been in contact with in order to reduce the prevalence of scabies.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express their thanks to all staff in Al-Gamohria and AL-Wahda teaching hospital for their help to this study.

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معدل حالات الجرب في مستشفيات حكوميين في عدن/اليمن

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استلم في: 18 نوفمبر 2022 / قبل في: 18 ديسمبر 2022 / نشر في: 31 ديسمبر 2022

المُلخَص

يمثل مرض الجرب معضلة صحية عامة كبرى خاصة عند ذوي الدخل المحدود. في منطقة الدراسة لا توجد دراسة مسبقة فيما يخص معدل انتشار مرض الجرب والعوامل المرتبطة به، لهذا أجريت هذه الدراسة. تهدف الدراسة إلى توفير بيانات تتعلق بمعدل مرض الجرب والعوامل ذو العلاقة وتقديم إجراءات الوقاية والسيطرة على العدوى. أجريت هذه الدراسة المقطعية خلال الفترة من 1 يناير إلى 30 يونيو 2022م في عيادات الجلدية لمستشفيات تعليميين الجمهورية ومستشفى الوحدة في محافظة عدن. أظهرت الدراسة أن من إجمالي (2575) مريض تم معاينتهم، 90 حالة لديها جرب (4.3%) وكانت أعلى نسبة إصابة للمرض عند الأطفال الذين يتراوح أعمارهم ما بين 8 سنوات إلى 15 سنة (27.8%). وكانت العدوى عند الذكور أعلى من الإناث (27.8% مقابل 42.2%). خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الظروف الاجتماعية والاقتصادية الصعبة مثل الأمية والزحام ومشاركة المضاجع وانعدام الوظيفة. بالإضافة إلى إصابة آخرين من الأسرة لها دلالة احصائية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الجرب، معدل، العوامل الاجتماعية والاقتصادية، عدن.

How to cite this article:

E. A. Badwi and S. A. Yousuf, "PREVALENCE OF SCABIES CASES IN TWO PUBLIC HOSPITALS ADEN / YEMEN", *Electron. J. Univ. Aden Basic Appl. Sci.*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 304-312, Dec. 2022. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47372/ejua-ba.2022.4.200>



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