

INFLUENCE OF GENDER IN THE PREVALENCE AND SEVERITY OF ATOPIC DERMATITIS IN SCHOOLCHILDREN

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Aims. To assess the influence of gender in the prevalence and severity of atopic dermatitis in Cartagena (Murcia, Spain)

Methods. Crossover study applying the ISAAC questionnaire in schoolchildren 13-14 years old of the city of Cartagena. We analysed the presence, in last 12 months, of: itching dermatitis (rash) for at least 6 months, atopic dermatitis (itching dermatitis in flexural areas), and eczema severity (child awoken by itching at least once a week). These variables were related to the gender of the schoolchildren. The statistical test applied was the Pearson's chi-square and odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals.

Results. 3018 schoolchildren answered the questionnaire, 1552 male and 1466 female.

A percentage of 7.6% (n=228) had suffered from itching rash, 9.9% (n=145) of girls and 5.4% (n=83) of boys (OR for girls over boys= 1.94; 95% CI 1.46-2.60).

Atopic dermatitis was suffered by 6.3% (n=190) of schoolchildren, 8.6% (n=126) of girls and 4.1% of boys (n=64) (OR=2.19; 95%CI 1.59-3.02).

A high percentage of those with atopic dermatitis was awakened by the itching (44.7%; n=85) of whom 42.8% (n=54) were girls and 48.4% (n=31) were boys (OR=.80; 95%CI .42-1.53). This was more frequent than once a week in 18.9% (n=36), 18.2% (n=23) of girls and 20.3% (n=13) of boys (OR=.88; 95%CI .39-2.00).

Conclusions. The prevalence of atopic eczema is 6.3% in our 13-14 years old schoolchildren population, being severe in one fifth of the cases. The prevalence is significantly higher in girls than in boys, but severity is similar for both genders.

