



Eczema among adults: prevalence, risk factors and relation to airway diseases. Results from a large-scale population survey in Sweden.

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Adult

Age Distribution

Aged

Asthma - complications - epidemiology

Eczema - complications - epidemiology

Female

Humans

Male

Middle Aged

Prevalence

Questionnaires

Respiratory Tract Diseases - complications - epidemiology

Rhinitis - complications - epidemiology

Risk factors

Sex Distribution

Sweden - epidemiology

Young Adult

Abstract:

In contrast to asthma and rhinitis, few studies among adults investigating the prevalence and risk factors of eczema have been published.

To investigate the prevalence and risk factors of eczema among adults in West Sweden. A further aim was to study the associations between asthma, rhinitis and eczema.

A questionnaire on respiratory health was mailed in 2008 to 30,000 randomly selected subjects in West Sweden aged 16-75 years; 62% responded. The questionnaire included questions about eczema, respiratory symptoms and diseases and their possible determinants. A subgroup of 669 subjects underwent skin prick testing against common airborne allergens.

'Eczema ever' was reported by 40.7% and 'current eczema' by 11.5%. Both conditions were significantly more common among women. The prevalence decreased with increasing age. The coexistence of both asthma and rhinitis with eczema was common. The main risk factors were family history of allergy and asthma. The dominant environmental risk factor was occupational exposure to gas, dust or fumes. Smoking increased the risk. Eczema was associated with urbanization, while growing up on a farm was associated with a decreased risk. Added one by one to the multivariate model, asthma, allergic rhinitis and any positive skin prick test were associated with eczema.

Eczema among adults is a common disease with more women than men having and having had eczema. Eczema is associated with other atopic diseases and with airway symptoms. Hereditary factors and exposure to gas, dust and fumes are associated with eczema.

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Gas, dust, and fumes exposure is associated with mite sensitization and with asthma in mite-sensitized adults.

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Surveys and Questionnaires
Sweden
Young Adult

Abstract: Occupational exposure to gas, dust, and fumes (GDF) increases the risk of asthma and eczema. We investigated the role of sensitization in the association between GDF and allergic conditions. A population-based sample of 788 adults from the West Sweden Asthma Study completed questionnaires and skin prick tests. After adjustment for confounders, GDF exposure was associated with a doubled risk of sensitization to mites, but not with other allergens. Mite sensitization also modified the effect of GDF on asthma. In mite-sensitized subjects, GDF was associated with physician-diagnosed asthma, adjusted OR 2.9 (1.2-7.2), and with wheeze, OR 2.4 (1.1-5.3). In non-mite-sensitized subjects, the corresponding ORs were 1.1 (0.5-2.6) and 0.6 (0.3-1.3). GDF was independently associated with eczema regardless of mite sensitization, but not with rhinitis. These novel findings suggest that components of GDF may act as adjuvants that facilitate sensitization to mites and that mite-sensitized individuals may be especially susceptible to inhalant occupational exposures.

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