

SKIN DISEASE IN THE WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN

A SURVEY OF THE INCIDENCE OF SKIN DISORDERS IN 13,500 DERMATOLOGICAL PATIENTS FROM THE TRANSVAAL AND ORANGE FREE STATE

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No publication exists on the frequencies of skin disorders in the White South African, and we feel that the present survey needs no apology. The material comprises 3 groups of consecutive patients, one from the Pretoria Hospital skin out-patient service (4,500) and the other two from the private consultant practices of each of us (5,000—G.H.F., 4,000—F.P.S.). All the diagnoses in the Pretoria Hospital group were made by one or other of the writers, except for some 1,500 seen by our assistants, Drs. I. J. Venter and E. J. Schulz.

Most of the patients in all 3 groups were Afrikaans-speaking. The hospital group was gathered from poorer people, and minor skin ailments were more readily referred to us by other sections of the hospital than they would be in private practice. At hospital there were also more patients who would in private practice sooner find themselves in the hands of a surgeon or radiotherapist.

The results in the 3 groups of our series are set out in the accompanying table together with those in the 4 other groups

referred to below, which are included for the purpose of comparison.

With a few exceptions, no condition with a frequency below 0.1% is noted in the table. The sequence of the diseases listed is intended to follow roughly the frequencies met with in South Africa, and thus to reflect their relative importance to the practitioner. It should be noted, however, that some important disorders (e.g. malignant melanoma) are too rare to find a place in the list.

Comparative figures are not easily accessible, and for this reason we have quoted the findings from three other sources, re-calculated to permit direct comparison. *The Australian series* presented here, incomplete as it is, provides interesting information from the Southern Hemisphere where White people also live a sunny outdoor life. It is adapted from a paper by Summons.¹ *The London figures* of Calnan and Meara² from St. John's Hospital are doubtless the best that have appeared from Britain, and are an invaluable source for

comparative studies. *The third and fourth series* included here for comparison are compiled from the Appendix in Radcliffe-Crocker's classic text-book.³ They give one an idea of conditions and practice in London at the turn of the century. One gathers that the surgeons claimed a greater share of skin disorders at that time than now. With the

growth in the operative aspects of surgery, the dermatologist appears to have taken over some of these disorders.

REFERENCES

1. Summons, J. (1955): Austral. J. Derm., 3, 15.
2. Calnan, C. D. and Meara, R. H. (1957): Trans. St. John's Hosp. Derm. Soc. (Lond.), 39, 56.
3. Radcliffe-Crocker, H. (1905): *Diseases of the Skin*, 3rd ed., vol. 2. London: H. K. Lewis.

PERCENTAGE ENUMERATION OF CASES IN DERMATOLOGICAL PRACTICE

- I Pretoria General Hospital, skin out-patients, Transvaal, South Africa, 1956-59. 4,500 cases seen by 4 dermatologists (see text).
- II Private dermatological practice (G.H.F.), Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa, 1955-59. 5,000 cases.
- III Private dermatological practice (F.P.S.), Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, South Africa, 1956-59. 4,000 cases.
- IV Private practice of 4 dermatologists, in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, 1938-52. 25,296 cases.
- V St. John's Hospital for Diseases of the Skin, London, England, 1952-56. 90,000 cases seen by 20 consultants.
- VI University College Hospital (skin out-patients), London, England, c. 1900. 10,000 cases. Radcliffe-Crocker.
- VII Private dermatological practice (Radcliffe-Crocker), London, England, c. 1900. 5,000 cases.

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
1 Eczemas(a)	28%	35%	29.4%	27.3% + 5.66%(v)	±35%	27.2%	26.1%
2 Acne vulgaris(b)	8%	10%	11.3%	4.85%	5.7%	2.5%	6.2%
3 Impetigo	7.8%	2.2%	3%	4.78% (incl. 12 and 43)	1.9%	9.6%	1%
4 Fungous infections(c)	6.9%	3.3%	5.3%	2.59%	2.4%	13.1%	3.1%
5 Warts(d)	5.9%	4%	4.2%	11.78%	7%	? nil or 0.1%	0.9%
6 Rodent ulcer	4.5%	2.2%	2.5%	7.88% (incl. 24)	0.87%	0.1%	0.7%
7 Psoriasis	3.2%	4.6%	4.8%	2.57%	5.6%	7.2%	6%
8 (a) Senile and solar keratoses	2.1%	4%	4%	4.95%	0.1%	? nil	nil
(b) Seborrhoeic warts	1%	3.6%	1%	—	0.5%	or 0.1%	or ? 3 cases
9 Urticaria(e)	2.3%	2.7%	1.2%	1.08%	1.7%	4.4%	3.8%
10 Scabies	2.5%	1.1%	1.6%	0.08%	0.8%	8%	1.2%
11 Sandworm(f)	2.4%	1.2%	0.4%	—	nil	nil	nil
12 Pyoderma(g)	1.6%	0.5%	0.45%	see 3	0.8%	? 1.5%	? 1.2%
13 Pityriasis rosea	1%	2.3%	1.3%	0.8%	0.4%	0.4%	1.2%
14 Light eruptions(h)	1%	1.5%	1.6%	12.8%(w)	0.4%	? 0.41%	0.4%
15 Varicose ulcer	1.2%	0.3%	2%	?	?	nil	nil
16 Lichen urticatus	1.2%	0.7%	1.2%	?	0.5%	? 0.35%	? 0.6%
17 Furuncle, carbuncle	1.1%	0.4%	0.9%	?	0.5%	0.35%	0.6%
18 Moles (cellular naevi)	1.1%	1.1%	1.3%	?	1.2%	nil	0.4%
19 Rosacea	0.2%	1%	0.4%	1.73%	1.4%	2%	6%
20 Puritus ani and vulvae	0.4%	1.1%	0.8%	1.8% incl. 37	1.1%	? incl. in 37	1.6%(bb)
21 Ichthyosis(i)	0.3%	1.1%	0.85%	?	0.3%	0.54%	0.7%
22 Lupus erythematosus(d)	0.9%	1%	0.8%	?	0.4%	0.6%	1.8%
23 Lichen planus	0.5%	0.9%	0.4%	0.3%	1.3%	1%	2.3%
24 Squamous carcinoma	0.7%	0.4%	0.8%	see 6	0.08%	nil	0.16%
25 Vitiligo	0.4%	0.7%	0.9%	?	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%
26 Erythema multiforme	0.6%	0.7%	0.4%	?	0.46%	1.1%	1.3%
27 Alopecia areata	0.6%	1.2%	1%	?	1.9%	2.5%	4.8%
28 Corns and calluses	0.6%	0.36%	0.2%	?	0.2%	nil	0.2%
29 Excoriations and artifacts	0.3%	0.5%	0.1%	?	0.2%	4 cases	nil
30 Haemangioma(d)	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	? 2.7%	0.9%	3 cases	0.24%
31 Leukoplakia	0.5%	0.4%	0.8%	?	0.05%	nil	ni
32 Toxicodermas(f)	0.2%	0.6%	1%	?	0.6%	0.1%	0.3%
33 Herpes zoster	0.6%	0.3%	0.4%	?	0.2%	0.6%	0.4%
34 Erythema nodosum	0.5%	0.4%	0.1%	?	0.02%	nil	nil
35 Pityriasis versicolor	0.4%	0.7%	0.45%	?	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
36 Prurigo group(k)	0.2%	0.3%	incl. in 16	?	0.1%	0.2%	nil
37 Pruritus (various)	0.6%	0.3%	0.6%	see 20	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%
38 Granuloma annulare	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	?	0.14%	nil	2 cases
39 Herpes simplex	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	?	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
40 Pernio, cold injury	0.3%	0.1%	0.15%	?	0.2%	? nil	? nil
41 Hyperidrosis	0.2%	0.3%	0.35%	?	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%
42 Exfoliative dermatitis	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	?	0.03%	0.14%(z)	0.3%
43 Folliculitis and sycosis barbae	0.6%	0.5%	0.3%	see 3	2.12%	0.8%	1.1%
44 Chloasma(l)	0.1%	0.4%	0.5%	?	0.3%	2 cases	0.2%
45 Hairfall(m)	0.1%	0.4%	0.25%	?	1.3% (?)	5 cases	9.8%
46 Molluscum contagiosum	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	?	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
47 Porphyria	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	?	?	?	?
48 Milia	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	?	2 cases	1 case	2 cases
49 Cysts (mainly sebaceous)	0.2%	0.1%	0.8%	?	0.2%	—	2 cases
50 Cornu cutaneum	0.2%	0.2%	0.35%	?	0.07%	? nil	? nil
51 Kerato-acanthoma(n)	0.1%	0.1%	0.25%	?	0.2%	? ?	? ?
52 Keloid	0.1%	0.1%	0.05%	?	0.1%	2 cases	0.2%

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
53 Intertrigo (uncomplicated)(a) ..	0.1%	0.1%	0.25%	?	0.54%	?	?
54 Chondrodermatitis helicis ..	0.1%	0.1%	1 case	?	0.03%	?	?
55 Colloid milium	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	?	nil	?	?
56 Radiodermatitis	0.1%	0.1%	0.25%		0.06%	nil	1 case
57 Telangiectases	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%		0.1%	3 cases	0.9%
58 Fevers(p)	0.1%	0.1%	0.05%		0.04%	0.4%	nil
59 Parasitoses(q)	0.2%	0.1%	1 case	= nil(x)	0.1%	3.9%	2.3%
60 Fibroma	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%		0.02%	1 case	3 cases
61 Cheilitis(d)	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%		0.1%	?	?
62 Keratosis pilaris	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%		0.06%	nil	nil
63 Allergide, etc.(r)	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%		? 0.2%	0.1%(aa)	3 cases
64 Granuloma pyogenicum ..	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%		0.2%	nil	nil
65 Keratolysis exfoliativa ..	0.1%	0.5%	—		?	?	?
66 Erysipelas and erysipeloid(s) ..	0.1%	0.2%	3 cases		0.02%	nil	nil
67 Nail dystrophies	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%		0.3%	0.2%	0.7%
68 Cellulitis	0.2%	—	—		0.05%	nil	nil
69 Lichen sclerosus et atrophicus ..	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%		0.05%	—	—
70 Dermatitis herpetiformis ..	0.1%	0.1%	0.15%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.6%
71 Scleroderma	0.1%	0.1%	3 cases		0.1%	8 cases	0.2%
72 Lipid proteinosis		13 cases(t) (0.1%)			nil	—	—
73 Pellagra		7 cases(t)			nil	—	—
74 Tuberculides		5 cases(t)			0.06%	—	—
75 Leprosy		2 cases(t)			0.06%(y)	6 cases	0.3%
76 Pemphigus		4 cases(t)		0.06%	0.03%	0.3%	0.3%
77 Pseudoxanthoma elasticum ..		8 cases(t)			4 cases	—	—
78 Sporotrichosis		4 cases(t)(u)		—	nil	—	—
79 Chromoblastomycosis		2 cases(t)(u)		?	nil	—	—
80 Sarcoid Boeck		1 case(t)		?	11 cases	?	?
81 Syphilis		2 cases(t)		16 cases	29 cases	5.4%	2.6%
82 Lupus vulgaris		1 case(t)		?	53 cases	1.3%	1%

(a) Including infantile, atopic, constitutional, seborrhoeic, pompholyx, contact, eczematide, varicose, chronic, infective, pityriasis alba, traumatic, seasonal, neurodermatitis, lichen simplex chronicus, and unclassified; excluding solar eczema.

(b) And related types.

(c) Including tinea and moniliasis; excluding pityriasis versicolor.

(d) All types.

(e) Excluding lichen urticatus—see 16.

(f) Larva migrans.

(g) Including ecthyma, abscess, paronychia, etc.;

excluding impetigo, boils, carbuncles.

(h) Solar eczema, etc.

(i) Severe xerosis.

(j) Including drug eruptions.

(k) Excluding Besnier type.

(l) And allied disorders.

(m) Excluding alopecia areata.

(n) Molluscum sebaceum.

(o) Uncomplicated.

(p) All types with exanthem.

(q) Including lice, myiasis, ticks, cercaria, and other insect bites.

(r) Including capillaritis, itching purpura, and Schamberg's disease.

(s) Frequency about equal.

(t) In 13,500 total.

(u) All from Transvaal.

(v) Seborrhoeic eruptions.

(w) Chronic solar dermatitis.

(x) Pediculosis.

(y) ? Whites.

(z) 'Pityriasis rubra'.

(aa) 'Purpura'.

(bb) 'Local pruritus'.