



Prevalence of Scabies in Baquba City, Diyala Province, Iraq

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Abstract

Background: Scabies is an itching skin disease which is caused by small mite called *Sarcoptes scabiei*. It is very highly contagious disease which spreads by direct skin to skin contact. The disease is characterized by severe itching, small rash over any part of skin but most commonly between fingers, buttocks and flexures. Severe itching is the hallmark of the infestation which can lead to secondary infection due to scratches. Other features may include presence of small burrow over the skin where this mite resides. The prevalence of scabies different from one country to another and also variable according to the age and gender for example in USA (2.6%), India (9.7%), in Iraq (6.5%) and more prevalent in adult.

Objective: The aim of this study was to evaluate the prevalence of scabies among patients with different skin disease in Diyala province, Iraq.

Patients and methods: A total number of (15891) patients with different skin disease was seen and examined in outpatient clinic of Baquba Teaching Hospital, for the period from the January to the December of 2016, out of this number only (344) had scabies infection, they involved in the study, they were (214) males and (130) females and diagnosed clinically or by investigation.

Results: The results revealed that the prevalence of scabies infection was (2.16%) among patients with different skin disease (15891) and less prevalent in females (37.8%) than male (62.2%) and highest prevalence was observed in age group more than (13) years (77.3%) while the lowest prevalence was seen in the age group less than two years (4.9%).

Conclusion: It was concluded that the scabies was a common skin disease among Iraqi patients with different skin disease and more common in young males than females patients.

Keywords: Scabies, *Sarcoptes scabiei*, prevalence.

Introduction

Scabies is a parasitic infestation caused by a mite known as the *Sarcoptes scabiei* var *hominis*. The mite, barely visible to the naked eye, burrows into the epidermis and lays eggs, triggering a host immune response that lead to intense itching in the skin in response to just a few mites⁽¹⁾. The burden of disease is highest in tropical countries, where scabies is endemic. Epidemiological studies worldwide have suggested a 7-28 year cyclic pattern of disease prevalence. Scabies is particularly in resource-poor communities with crowded living conditions. Some studies have suggested higher rate in urban areas and an increased incidence during winter months^(2,3).

The disease is also more common in institutional environments such as prisons and old age homes, where outbreaks of disease are frequently reported. Spreading of scabies usually occurs during unfavorable events such as wars, floods, earthquakes, and other natural and human induced critical times^(2,3). The symptoms of scabies, the hallmark symptoms of scabies include a rash and intense itching that get worse at night. Continuous scratching of the infected area can create sores that become infected. Common sites for scabies in older children and adult include the: wrist, elbow, nipple, penis, buttocks and between the fingers⁽⁴⁾. Scabies diagnosed by performing a

physical exam and inspecting the affected area of skin. In some cases, the doctor may want to confirm the diagnosis by removing a mite from the skin with a needle. If a mite can't easily be found, will scrape off the surface of the burrow to obtain a tissue sample. This sample will then be examined under a microscope to confirm the presence of scabies mites or their eggs^(5,6). The prevalence of scabies infection of the skin is variable among different age groups, gender, socio-economic level and countries, in USA (2.6%), in Tunisia (2.7%), in Saudi Arabia (0.55%), in Australia (vagi) (22.4%), in India (9.7%) and in general it is more prevalent in adult males^(7,8). In Karbala, the study showed that the prevalence was (6.5%) of all skin diseases^(9,10). Treatment of scabies usually involves getting rid of the infestation with prescription of ointments, creams and lotions that can be applied directly on the skin. The medication should be applied at night when the mites are most active, the medication can be washed off on the following morning, may be needed to repeat the topical treatment after 7 days. More aggressive treatment may be needed for severe or widespread scabies, an oral tablet ivermectin.

The aim of the study was to evaluate the prevalence of scabies in Baquba city.

Patients and Methods

A retrospective study was done in Baquba Teaching Hospital in Diyala- Iraq, in which (15891) patients with different skin diseases from 1 January - 31 December 2016, out of this number (344) patients had scabies, they were (214) males and (130) females, their ages range from 1 month - 78 years, the patients were examined and diagnosed under supervision of a dermatologist.

The patients were grouped into three groups according to the age:

1. Infantile group: less than two years
2. Childhood group: from 2 to 13 years
3. Adulthood group: more than 13 years

Results

A total number of (15891) patients was seen in the outpatient clinic of Baquba Teaching Hospital with different skin diseases, (344) patients diagnosed as scabies (2.16%), they were 130 (37.8%) females and 214 (62.2%) males. The infantile group involved 17

patients (4.9%), the childhood group involved 61 patients (17.8%) and the adult group involved 266 (77.3%).

Discussion

The study showed that the prevalence of scabies (2.16%) in Baquba, which was in concordance with that in India (9.7%), goes with the study done in USA (2.6%). The variation may be due to the difference in life style, habits, over crowding and socio-economic status of the people. The study revealed that the scabies infection were more prevalent in the male (62.2%) than females (37.8%), which was different from that of other countries, was not concordant with the study done in India in which females more than 25 years old predominantly affected but there was no significant difference in the prevalence by sex for all ages⁽¹¹⁾. The scabies infection was more prevalent in the adulthood age group than in childhood and infantile age groups (77.3%, 17.8%, 4.9% respectively) which was not concordant with the study results done in India which show more prevalence in school age groups (23.7%)⁽¹²⁾. In general this study revealed that the scabies infection was more common among males than females in the adulthood age group which also concordant with that of other countries⁽¹²⁾.

Conclusion

It was concluded that there is a high prevalence of scabies infection in Baquba City, and males were more frequently affected than females, with high prevalence in adulthood than childhood and infantile age groups.

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