

P03-490

LIFE COURSE AND FAMILY HISTORY IN DERMATITIS ARTEFACT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Introduction: Dermatitis artefact (DA) is a self-inflicted skin disease. The exploration of family history and life course of patients could help to better understand the pathogenesis of this disorder.

Objective: To compare family history and life course between patients with DA with patients with other chronic skin disease and siblings.

Materials and methods: Thirty female patients meeting DSM-IV criteria of DA were recruited in dermatology department of Farhat Hached hospital (Sousse, Tunisia).

Controls consisted of 30 patients with chronic dermatitis, randomly selected and matched for age and disease duration. For each patient, one sister, the closest in age, was recruited to constitute the siblings group.

Result: Compared with controls, DA patients had lower educational level ($p < 10^{-3}$), less occupational activity ($p = 0.002$) and were more often single ($p < 10^{-3}$). They reported more medical care or prolonged hospitalization in childhood ($p = 0.013$), more psychiatric disorders ($p = 0.006$) and more suicide attempts ($p = 0.001$).

Compared with their sisters, patients with DA had fewer professional activity ($p < 10^{-3}$), and were more often single ($p < 10^{-3}$). They also had more medical history or prolonged hospitalizations during childhood ($p = 0.006$), more psychiatric disorders ($p = 0.002$) and more suicide attempts ($p = 0.001$).

Conclusion: Compared to their sisters and to patients with other chronic skin disease, DA patients were more often single, less often professionally active and had more medical care during childhood, psychiatric history and suicide attempts.