Pros and Cons

Pro and Con-Is the prevalence of atopic dermatitis in Korean children still increasing?

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Investigation on the changing trend in the prevalence of atopic dermatitis (AD) is important for monitoring of diseases burden and identifying the possible causes in combined with the underlying pathophysiologies of AD.

Data for trends in the prevalence of AD shows diverse changes.[1] Differences and changes in the prevalence of AD are affected by regions with the complex interactions between environmental and genetic factors.[2] The variations in the worldwide prevalence of AD, even in genetically similar groups, suggest that the more important role of environmental factors compared to genetic factors in the development of AD.[3-5]

The prevalence of AD seems to vary across the world. The prevalence of AD has been found to have increased in some parts of the world, whereas decreasing trend was observed in other parts.[5,6] Through the International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood (ISAAC) study, comprehensive research on the prevalence of AD and trend has been performed.[4,5] Questionnaire included the following questions to evaluate the prevalence of AD; “Has your child/Have you had this itchy rash at any time in the past 12 months?” and “Has this itchy rash at any time affected any of the following places?”. Also, two age groups were included; 6-7 years children and 13-14 years children In ISAAC study.[4]

Diverse variation in the prevalence of AD was observed across the world from less than 5% to more than 15%.7 Based on the ISAAC study, Phases One and Three, the prevalence of AD did not significantly increase further or even decreased in some regions.[1] However, in low-income countries, including Africa and East Asia, the prevalence of AD showed an increasing trend even in a recent study.[5]

Recent study on the incidence rates of AD in the Danish children from 1997 to 2011 and Swedish children from 2006 to 2010 reported that the incidence rate of AD was stable during the study periods in both groups.[2] According to the database of Korean National Health Insurance Service from 2009 to 2014, the prevalence of AD in Korean children aged 18 or younger seems to be decreasing from 6.5% to 5.8% from 2009 through 2014.[8]

Of course, an increasing trend in the prevalence of AD was observed in some developing countries in Asia and Africa.[7] The differences in the trend of AD prevalence according to the studies are attributable to the socioeconomic status of the enrolled centers and countries, study design, and definition and diagnostic criteria of AD. More comprehensive studies and appropriate interpretation of data are needed for more accurate estimation of the trend of AD.[9]

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