

PERSONALITY VULNERABILITY TO STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS IN PATIENTS WITH LICHEN SIMPLEX CHRONICUS

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Introduction. Stressful life events had been shown to trigger or exacerbate skin diseases like alopecia areata, psoriasis, pemphigus and vitiligo in conjunction with personality vulnerability to disease like alexithymia. Both represent risks factors for developing a skin disease (1-4). In non-clinical population influence of stressful life events has also been reported (5). Lichen simplex chronicus is frequently related to emotional distress and psychological perturbations (6). But no study has explored the number of stressful life events in this condition yet.

Objectives. The aim of this work is to account for the percentage of stressful life events in the previous months of the development of dermatologic disease in a sample of lichen simplex chronicus.

Methodology. A questionnaire about the existence or not of several common stressful life events were administered to 52 patients with lichen simplex chronicus. In addition, the Spanish version of the Millon Index of Personality Styles (MIPS) designed for normal population (7) was administered. The clinical index which is a measure derived from the MIPS to express the adaptation level of the subject to his milieu from an evolutionary perspective, was calculated and used as a psychological vulnerability measure. MIPS has a normative sample of normal population which was utilized as a reference sample. Both measures were analysed in order to evaluate their possible role in triggering the disease.

Results. The clinical index was lower in lichen simplex chronicus sample than in the reference sample taken from MIPS. Of the sample 60% had a stressful life event some months before the development of the disease (14.6% death of a relative, 4.8% divorce, 17% birth of a child, 2.4% loss of job, 12.2% economic problems, 31.7 job stress and 17% other problems).

Discussion and Conclusions. The occurrence of stressful life events may be a risk factor for triggering a dermatological disease as seen before. In addition to this, psychological vulnerability may also aggravate the subjective impact and thus increase the probability of developing lichen simplex chronicus. Differences in the levels of personality vulnerability between both samples may inform to which extent this psychological factors contribute to develop the disease.

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