

ABSTRACT

A study of the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of selected physicians in Western Jamaica on common skin diseases in children (0-4 years)

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Skin disease is one of the top five illnesses that motivated a visit to the Primary Health Care facilities all over the Island.

In Jamaica, the under 5-age group represented 11.1% of the total population. This group also represented the largest dependent group of the total population.

The aim of this study was to assess the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of selected physicians in Western Jamaica on common skin diseases in children (0-4 years).

A total of 79 selected physicians (District Medical Officers, Casualty Medical Officers and Private Physicians) completed a structured questionnaire. Exit interview with 23 patient's mothers/guardians and one dermatologist were also conducted to gain further insight in the management of skin diseases in children (0-4 years). Data was analyzed using the statistical software SPSS version 7.5.

The result shows that pattern of skin diseases in children (0-4 years) seen by Nondermatologists and Dermatologist was different. The most common diseases seen by Nondermatologist were (1) scabies (2) Tinea Capitis (3) Impetigo (4) eczema (5) Tinea Coporis compared to (1) Atopic Dermatitis (2) Eczema (3) Papular Urticaria (4) Scabies (5) Tinea Capitis by Dermatologist.

Majority of physicians agreed that numbers of children (0-4 years) with skin diseases are increasing over the years. The reasons for this were lower socioeconomic status, poor personal hygiene, lack of health education, poorly staffed PHC. Exit interview supported the same result. Sixty-seven percentage of respondents indicated that skin diseases in children (0-4 years) is a public health problem in western Jamaica. Majority of respondents expressed that there should be a specific guideline for Nondermatologists on management of common skin diseases in children (0-4 years).

Fourty- four (55.7%) indicated that they have fair knowledge on skin diseases in children but difficulty in diagnosis of skin disease in children was second most challenging aspect identified by 40% of respondents.

The study recommends further study on impact of skin diseases on health care system, develop a specific guideline for general practitioners on management of skin diseases in children and continue medical (skin) education for all Nondermatologists on this“ Healthy skin for all”.