

Original research article

A study to investigate on the prevalence of dermatological lesions in patients with diabetic retinopathy

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Abstract

Aim: The purpose of this study was to investigate on the prevalence of dermatological lesions in patients with diabetic retinopathy.

Material and methods: This cross sectional study was done the Department of Ophthalmology, Nalanda Medical College and Hospital, Patna, Bihar, India, for 12 months. 100 patients with diabetic retinopathy having diabetes mellitus of at least 5 years duration, aged between 35-65 years, were included in this study. The dermatological examination was done by a dermatologist under proper day light and if needed, using hand held magnifying lens. Examination of the retina was done by an Ophthalmologist using indirect ophthalmoscopy of dilated fundus, fundus photo, fundus fluorescein angiography and optical coherence tomography of the macula.

Results: 100 patients who had DR were included in the study. The mean age was 57.62(SD 5.87) years. There was a slight female preponderance with 41 males (41%) and 59 females (59%) among the 100 patients. Of the 100 diabetic patients included in this study, 9(9%) had Very Mild Non Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy (NPDR), 32(32%) had Mild NPDR, 35(35%) had Moderate NPDR, 11(11%) had Severe NPDR, 13(13%) had Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy (PDR) and 40(40%) had Clinically Significant Macular Edema (CSME). 32 patients (32%) were on Oral hypoglycaemic agents (OHA), 17(17%) were on Insulin and 51(51%) were on both OHA & Insulin. Only 40(40%) out of the 100 patients had good control of DM. 45(45%) out of 100 patients had Systemic Hypertension (HTN). The prevalence is being 83%. Dermatological lesions among poor glycemic control DM patients had a prevalence of 53% which was higher as compared to 33% among good glycemic control DM patients.

Conclusion: Prevalence of Dermatological lesions in Diabetic Retinopathy patients was 83%, the most common being Diabetic Dermopathy (shin spots) which was 41%.

Keywords: dermatological lesions, diabetic, diabetic retinopathy, etc

Introduction

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is the most common endocrine disorder with a significant burden on the patients, health care system, and the society.^{1,2} About 11 million people in the USA are diagnosed with DM, of which 90% are insulin independent DM.³ Some cutaneous manifestations related to DM such as acanthosis nigricans and pigmented purpuric dermatosis are the signs of microvascular complications.⁴ At least 30% of patients with DM are affected by different types of cutaneous disorders during the chronic course of their disease.⁵ In the classification of cutaneous manifestations in DM, they are divided into four categories: (1) cutaneous diseases with weak to strong association with DM; (2) cutaneous infections; (3) cutaneous manifestations of DM complications; and (4) cutaneous reactions to DM treatments.^{6,7} Long-term DM duration causes permanent and irreversible functional changes

and damage to body cells, and therefore, it leads to problems arising from biochemical, structural, and functional anomalies.^{8,9} Cutaneous complications of DM provide a clue to the current and past metabolic status of the patient.⁵ Cutaneous infections occur in 20- 50% of patients and are often along with moderate blood glucose control. Microvascular circulatory disorders, peripheral vascular diseases, peripheral neuropathy, and immune responses reduction are all contributing factors to an increased susceptibility of infection.¹⁰ Common cutaneous infections, staphylococcal infections, are more perilous and severe in patients with uncontrolled DM. Other types of infection include styes that cause tuberculosis of eyelid and also bacterial infection of the nails.¹¹ A fungus called *Candida albicans* is responsible for numerous fungal infections affecting diabetic patients; these infections are common in vaginal area and lips corners (angular cheilitis).¹¹ Candidiasis infection (moniliasis) can be considered as an early symptom of undiagnosed DM and localized candidiasis infection in the genital area of women has a strong relationship with DM.¹² Increasing the knowledge about cutaneous manifestations of DM can be associated with overall prognosis improvement of disease through the early diagnosis and treatment.¹³ According to various studies, 30-82% of DM patients experience different types of cutaneous disorder during the chronic course of their disease.^{6,14} Controlling the metabolism of the body may prevent some of these manifestations and also support the treatment.¹⁵ On the other hand, many glycemic control medications also have skin side effects.¹⁶ People who have cutaneous manifestation related to DM, even without a history of DM, should be investigated for the possibility of the disease.¹⁷ Diabetes mellitus (DM) is a highly prevalent interdisciplinary disorder that needs many different specialties' attention; however, the importance of dermatologists' knowledge has not been highlighted regarding this issue. As a result, we aim to assess the prevalence and variety of DM skin and nail manifestations in an effort to further acquaint dermatologists and other clinicians with diabetic dermatologic manifestations.

Material and methods

This cross sectional study was done the Department of Ophthalmology, Nalanda Medical College and Hospital, Patna, Bihar, India, for 12 months, after taking the approval of the protocol review committee and institutional ethics committee.

100 patients with diabetic retinopathy having diabetes mellitus of at least 5 years duration, aged between 35-65 years, were included in this study. Patients suffering from ophthalmological conditions like hypertensive retinopathy, vascular occlusion and advanced cataract that may affect the findings were excluded from the study.

A questionnaire, which is semi structured was used to collect the data. The dermatological examination was done by a dermatologist under proper day light and if needed, using hand held magnifying lens. Examination of the retina was done by an Ophthalmologist using indirect ophthalmoscopy of dilated fundus, fundus photo, fundus fluorescein angiography and optical coherence tomography of the macula. Socio-demographic details of patients including name, age, sex, educational status and occupation, questions on diabetes mellitus like duration of diabetes, medications and associated conditions were included.

The collected data was entered in MS Excel software and was analysed using SPSS ver 16. The study protocol was approved by the Institutional ethical committee (ICE). Privacy and confidentiality of the patients were maintained and those detected to have any lesion were managed appropriately.

Results

100 patients who had DR were included in the study. The range of age was from 35 years to 65 years. The mean age was 57.62(SD 5.87) years. The duration of diabetes mellitus in this

group was 5 to 30 years with a mean duration of 14.11 years (SD 5.29). Out of the 100 patients, 67% had some form of education of which, majority 70(70%) were housewives. There was a slight female preponderance with 41 males (41%) and 59 females (59%) among the 100 patients. (Table 1).

Table 1: Gender distribution diabetic retinopathy

Gender	Number of patients	Percentage
Male	41	41
Female	59	59

Of the 100 diabetic patients included in this study, 9(9%) had Very Mild Non Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy (NPDR), 32(32%) had Mild NPDR, 35(35%) had Moderate NPDR, 11(11%) had Severe NPDR, 13(13%) had Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy (PDR) and 40(40%) had Clinically Significant Macular Edema (CSME).

Table 2: Distribution of diabetic retinopathy

	Number of patients	Percentage
Very mild NPDR	9	9
Mild NPDR	32	32
Moderate	35	35
Severe	11	11
PDR	13	13
Csme	40	40

32 patients (32%) were on Oral hypoglycaemic agents (OHA), 17(17%) were on Insulin and 51(51%) were on both OHA & Insulin.

Only 40(40%) out of the 100 patients had good control of DM. 45(45%) out of 100 patients had Systemic Hypertension (HTN) along in addition to DM with a duration of 0.0954 (1 month) to 22 years with a mean duration of 3.85 years (SD 5.63).

83 among 100 DR patients had different types of dermatological lesions, the prevalence being 83%. Dermatological lesions among poor glycemic control DM patients had a prevalence of 53% which was higher as compared to 33% among good glycemic control DM patients.

Out of 83 patients, the most prevalent dermatological lesions noted were diabetic dermopathy, Xerosis, Idiopathic Guttate Hypomelanosis (IGH), Ichthyosis, Intertrigo, Tinea Versicolor and Chronic Paronychia, while the less prevalent ones were Eczema, Melasma, Lichen Amyloidosis, Varicose vein, Fissure feet, Pigmented Purpuric Dermatitis (PPD), Dermatitis Papulosa Nigra (DPN), Sclerodactyly, Plain warts, Macular Amyloidosis, Cherry Aneurysm, Xanthelasma Palpebrarum, Photo dermatitis, Skin tags, Onychomycosis, Onychogryphosis and Prurigo.

41(41%) patients had diabetic dermopathy, 31(31%) had Xerosis, 27(27%) had IGH, 23(23%) patients had Ichthyosis, 6(6%) patients had Intertrigo, 5(5%) patients had Tinea Versicolor, 4(4%) patients had Chronic Paronychia and 4(4%) patients had Tinea Unguium.

3(3%) patients had Eczema, 2(2%) had Melasma, 2(2%) had Lichen Amyloidosis, 2(2%) had Varicose vein, 1(1%) had Fissure feet, 1(1%) had Pigmented Purpuric Dermatitis (PPD), 1(1%) had Dermatitis Papulosa Nigra (DPN), 1(1%) had Sclerodactyly, 1(1%) had Plain warts, 1(1%) had Macular Amyloidosis, 1(1%) had Cherry Aneurysm, 1(1%) had Xanthelasma Palpebrarum, 1(1%) had Photo dermatitis, 1(1%) had Skin tags, 1(1%) had Onychomycosis, 1(1%) had Onychogryphosis and 1(1%) had Prurigo. Table 3 and 4 shows the gender distribution of Dermatological lesions among Diabetic Retinopathy patients.

Table 3: distribution of most prevalent Dermatological lesions among DR patients

Dermatological Lesions	Number of patients	Percentage
Diabetic dermopathy (shin spots)	41	41
Xerosis	31	31
IGH	27	27
Icthyosis	23	23
Intertrigo	6	6
Tinea Versicolor	5	5
Chronic Paronychia	4	4
Tinea Unguium	4	4

Table 4: Distribution of less prevalent Dermatological lesions among DR patients

Dermatological Lesions	Number of patients	Percentage
Eczema	3	3
Melasma	2	2
Lichen Amyloidosis	2	2
Varicose veins	2	2
Fissure feet	1	1
PPD	1	1
DPN	1	1
Sclerodactyly	1	1
Plain warts	1	1
Macular Amyloidosis	1	1
Cherry Aneurysm	1	1
Xanthelasma Palpebrarum	1	1
Photodermatitis	1	1
Skin tags	1	1
Onychomycosis	1	1
Onychogryphosis	1	1
Prurigo	1	1

Discussion

Poor glycemic control might lead on to prolonged hyperglycemia. Prolonged hyperglycemia causes microcirculation and glycosylation of proteins which in turn results in complications in various organ systems of the body. Kidney, retina, nerves, and skin are the most commonly affected which manifests as renal failure, retinopathy, neuropathy and Diabetic dermopathy.^{18,19} In our study, Dermatological lesions among DR patients who had poor glycemic control had a prevalence of 53% which was higher as compared to 33% among good glycemic control patients.

Skin (Dermatological) disorders in DM can occur due to diabetic vascular abnormalities, cutaneous infections, treatment complications especially with Insulin, associated hyperlipidemia and other miscellaneous causes. Lesions like Diabetic dermopathy, erysipelas-like erythema, Diabetic rubeosis, leg ulcers and wet gangrene of the foot are due to vascular abnormalities. Non clostridial gas gangrene, candida albicans etc. are due to cutaneous infections. Insulin reactions can lead on to insulin lipodystrophy and associated hyperlipidemia can cause acanthosis nigricans, eruptive xanthomas and skin tags. Other manifestations like diabetic bullae, pruritis, waxy skin, scleroderma diabeticorum, vitiligo, lichen planus etc. are also noticed in DM.²⁰

In our cross sectional study, 100 patients with DR were included, who all had suffered from type 2 DM for at least 5 years. Prevalence of dermatological lesions among these patients was found to be 83%, and the most Prevalent Dermatological lesion was Diabetic dermopathy (shin spots) which was 41%, 31(31%) had Xerosis, 27(27%) had IGH, 23(23%) patients had Ichthyosis, 6(6%) patients had Intertrigo, 5(5%) patients had Tinea Versicolor, 4(4%) patients had Chronic Paronychia and 4(4%) patients had Tinea Unguim.

George and Walton also reported that Diabetic dermopathy (diabetic shin spots) is the commonest skin condition that occurs in patients with DM.²¹ A study conducted among 125 DM patients by Kalsy et al found that the most frequent skin lesions was diabetic dermopathy.²² In another study done by Chatterjee et al among 490 Type 2 diabetics, infections, Xerosis, hair loss beneath the knees and diabetic dermopathy were the most frequent.²³ A thorough search of literature could not give any studies which investigated on the prevalence of diabetic dermatological lesions in DR patients. Though both DR and Dermatological lesions are considered to be the complications of DM, we could not demonstrate the exact nature of association between these two in our study and further studies are required to do so.

Conclusion

Prevalence of Dermatological lesions in Diabetic Retinopathy patients was 83%, the most common being Diabetic Dermopathy (shin spots) which was 41%.

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