

The Patient-Oriented Eczema Measure

Development and Initial Validation of a New Tool for Measuring Atopic Eczema Severity From the Patients' Perspective

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Objective: To develop a simple, valid, repeatable, and readily understandable patient-oriented assessment measure for monitoring disease activity in children and adults with atopic eczema.

Design: Qualitative semistructured patient interviews identified a list of symptoms of atopic eczema. These symptoms were quantitatively analyzed in a larger patient population to identify which symptoms were important to patients and amenable to monitoring as part of a scoring system.

Setting: The outpatient Department of Dermatology at the Queen's Medical Centre, University Hospital, Nottingham, England, and 5 local general practices.

Patients: Four hundred thirty-five patients with atopic eczema.

Results: Seven symptoms were incorporated into the final patient-oriented eczema measure using a simple

5-point scale of frequency of occurrence during the previous week, with a maximum total score of 28. Validity testing against the Dermatology Life Quality Index, Children's Dermatology Life Quality Index, and patients' global severity assessments showed good correlation ($r=0.78$, $r=0.73$, and $r=0.81$, respectively; $P<.001$). Internal consistency was high (Cronbach $\alpha=0.88$), and test-retest reliability was good, with 95% of scores falling within 2.6 points on repeat testing (mean score difference, 0.04; SD, 1.32). Individual variables in the measure demonstrated sensitivity to change during a 4-week in-clinic period and an 18-week randomized controlled clinical trial.

Conclusion: The patient-oriented eczema measure is a practical self-assessed measurement tool for monitoring aspects of atopic eczema that are important to patients in routine clinical practice or in the clinical trial setting.

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