

Comment

The problem of ageing societies is soon going to become a major challenge for the health care systems in the world. The Polish specialist literature is more and more concerned with the health problems of elderly people and that is why this issue of "Progress in Medicine" presents mainly papers on various themes in this field. I hope that the problems in this series of articles will interest a wide range of readers.

Molecular biology techniques have been dynamically developing over the last decades. Two very interesting original papers pertain to molecular research on non-melanoma skin neoplasms (Department of Molecular Biology, Department and Clinic of Dermatology, Department of Cosmetology, Institute of Skin Structure Research of the Medical University of Silesia). The first paper presents the role of the transforming growth factor beta in basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and keratoacanthoma (KA). The aim of the paper was to compare the profile of 1050 mRNA concentrations – genes connected with TGF β signalling pathways in samples from BCC, SCC and KA, in relation to normal skin, and to identify the genes that are essentially different in the analysed groups of transcriptomes. The authors report that a significant reduction of the transcriptional activity of TGFBR3 gene, along with a light reduction of TGFBR3 gene expression in SCC and BCC, and overexpression of TGFBI may be considered a complementary marker in differentiating carcinoma from keratoacanthoma.

The other paper refers to the role of the DEFB4A defensin in differentiating and identification of KA, SCC and BCC. The authors believe that DEFB4A defensin is a useful tool to identify and differentiate KA, SCC and BCC. KA and SCC cannot be differentiated on the basis of the DEFB4A level.

Beata Bergler-Czop from the Department and Clinic of Dermatology of the Medical University of Silesia in her original paper presents the problem of bullous pemphigoid cases in dermatology wards in the Silesian region over fourteen years. This condition usually affects elderly people. The relative risk of developing it at the age of 90 is almost 300 times higher than at the age of 60. In our material, the mean age was 71.13 ± 11.8 . The frequency of pemphigoid cases in different age groups as well as its co-occurrence with cancers and other conditions were analysed. The literature estimates the number of internal organ cancers as 15-20% (our findings were similar). Whether the frequency of cancer cases in patients over 70 years of age corresponds to the frequency in the population is still questionable.

In another original article, we present the problem of pruritus ani, which is four times more frequent in men than in women, usually when they are between 40 and 70 years old. The aim of the paper was an analysis of frequency of various etiologic factors in patients with refractory pruritus ani. It is often wrongly diagnosed and therefore inadequately treated. The situation is a result of anatomic features as skin lesions in this area are often nonspecific. It has been shown that the majority of patients have typical signs of eczema of the anogenital area. Pruritus ani is a syndrome not a diagnosis and therefore precise diagnosis and therapy should be carried out by a dermatologist and proctologist working together.

The next article concerns the role of Demodex folliculorum in rosacea. The main aim of this article was to present the current state of knowledge on the Demodex folliculorum mite and its connection with the pathogenesis of rosacea on the basis of literature review and standardised modified biopsy of the skin surface in patients with rosacea. The result confirmed the infestation in 11 out of 38 patients with rosacea and it suggests that the Demodex folliculorum mite can be a direct or indirect pathogen.

The last original paper presents conclusions of a pilot investigation concerning psychosocial aspects and life quality of patients with androgenic alopecia. The aim was to show the results of a study on life quality in patients with androgenic alopecia on the basis of the author's questions as well as a modified DLQI questionnaire. According to the author, alopecia affects mainly young males, and, as they tend to be psychologically immature, it may seriously affect their self-esteem as well as the quality of life. With age, alopecia has a smaller influence on lowering the quality of life assessed on the basis of the DLQI questionnaire. The quality of life was lower in all analysed aspects except for doing sport and working. Alopecia heavily affects social contacts. On the one hand, psychological factors, for example a very stressful situation, can result in or aggravate scalp disorders. On the other hand, loss of hair can distort patient's self-esteem, which leads to life quality deterioration.

The next two papers in this issue are review articles from the clinic centre I am head of. The first one pertains to the ageing of the skin, a natural process consisting in reduction of biological activity of cells, slowing of the regeneration processes and loss of adaptability of the organism. The genetic aspects along with environmental

factors like UV radiation are decisive here. A part of these changes can be eliminated, another part can be prevented, nevertheless, with time, the characteristic features of ageing become visible. Substances that efficiently counteract ageing processes include vitamin A and its derivatives, UVA and UVB filters, hydroxy acids, antioxidants, hyaluronic acid and non-invasive (non-surgical) rejuvenating programmes.

The second paper, by Anna Lis-Święty, presents recent reports on precancerous skin lesions, including their diagnostics and therapy. Precancerous lesions and in-situ cancers are early stadia of epithelial neoplasms of the skin. Above all, the molecular and cytogenetic research showed that actinic keratosis and Bowen's disease precede the development of squamous cells skin cancers. Arsenical keratosis, tar keratosis and keratosis conditioned by X-radiation may be connected with basal cell skin carcinoma and/or squamous cell carcinoma.

Another article I would like to draw your attention to pertains to skin lesions in dementia syndromes that lead to inability of active life in society, loss of autonomy or disability. The increasing number of dementia cases calls for their quick diagnostics. Co-occurrence of skin lesions that are easily detectable in early stages seems to be important for the diagnostics of these syndromes.

Grażyna Chodorowska from the Lublin centre summarises the current knowledge on rosacea, especially its therapeutic options. It is a review of literature and presents the most important recent reports.

The last review presents hair disorders in women during menopause. The ageing of societies results in a greater number of such women. A large part of them can experience deteriorated quality of life. The pathogenesis of most of such disorders remains unclear, however some of them can be an important marker of systemic diseases and knowing them is of great importance.

I hope you will find our publication interesting.

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