

Original Research Article

Pityriasis versicolor in children: a study of 110 cases

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ABSTRACT

Background: Pityriasis versicolor (PV) is a cutaneous fungal infection caused by the yeast fungus *Malassezia*. Though common in adults, children can also develop PV.

Methods: 110 cases of clinically and mycologically proven cases of PV in children upto 14 years were included in this study which was conducted in the Dermatology outpatient department of Karuna Medical College, Palakkad over a period of one year.

Results: PV in children accounted for 22.63% of total cases of PV seen during the study period. Face was the commonest site involved (78%). Majority (83.64%) presented with hypopigmentation and family history was present in 26%. Most cases (67%) were seen during the months of April to September.

Conclusions: PV in children is not rare and it commonly presents as asymptomatic hypopigmented macules over the face.

Keywords: Children, Hypopigmentation, *Malassezia*, Pityriasis, Versicolor

INTRODUCTION

Pityriasis versicolor (PV) is a superficial cutaneous mycoses caused by *Malassezia* species commonly seen in tropical countries. Clinically it is characterised by hypopigmented or hyperpigmented scaly lesions over the body. PV is commonly seen in young adults, but it is not rare in children.¹ Only few studies describe the prevalence and clinical features of PV in children. This study was done to observe the clinicoepidemiological features of PV in children.

METHODS

One hundred and ten cases of PV in children upto 14 years of age were included in the study. The study was carried out in the Dermatology outpatient department of Karuna Medical College, Palakkad over a period of 1

year from September 2015 to August 2016 after getting ethical clearance from the institution. Patients clinically diagnosed as PV showing the presence of the yeast fungus *Malassezia* in potassium hydroxide mount were included. A detailed history including the patient's age, sex, socioeconomic status, family history, cleanliness, seasonal variation, duration, symptoms, history of recurrence, application of body oil and type of clothing were recorded. A detailed clinical examination was done to determine the colour and distribution of skin lesions and any other associated dermatological or systemic diseases.

RESULTS

Out of the 486 cases of PV diagnosed during the study period, 110 cases (22.63%) were seen in children. The majority of children belonged to the age group of 10 to 14 years (Table 1). Out of the 110 children, 76 (69%)

were boys and 34 (31%) were girls. Hypopigmented type of PV was seen in 92 children (83.64%) and hyperpigmented type in 18 (16.36%). Only 14 children (12.7%) complained of pruritus. Face was the most common site involved followed by chest (Table 2). Family history of PV was present in 26% of children. Maximum cases (37%) were seen during the months of July to September (Table 3).

Table 1: Age distribution.

Age in years	Number of children	Percentage (%)
0-1	2	1.82
>1 -5	23	20.91
>5 -10	38	34.55
>10-14	47	42.73

Table 2: Site affected.

Site	Number of children	Percentage (%)
Face	86	78.18
Neck	21	19.09
Anterior trunk	36	32.73
Posterior trunk	18	16.36
Upper limb	12	10.91
Lower limb	1	0.91

Table 3: Seasonal distribution.

Months	Number of children	Percentage (%)
Jan-March	20	18.18
April-June	33	30
July-Sept	41	37.27
Oct-Dec	16	14.55

DISCUSSION

Pityriasis versicolor is a superficial fungal infection caused by *Malassezia* and the common species are *M. globosa*, *M. furfur* and *M. sympodialis*.² The skin lesions are usually seen over the sebum rich areas of the body like chest, face and neck, upper back and proximal arms. It is usually seen in adults though it is not very uncommon in children as seen in our study. The most common age group affected in our study was 10 to 14 years. Similar results were seen in studies by Jena et al and Silva et al.^{3,4} Majority of the cases presented during the hot and humid climates. Miskeen et al and Rao et al at

also found increased incidence during summer and monsoon seasons.^{5,6} The most common site was the face followed by the chest. Similar results were observed by Dena et al and Terragni et al.^{3,7} Hypopigmented type of PV was seen in vast majority of children and most of the children were asymptomatic.

CONCLUSION

PV in pediatric age group is not rare and it commonly presents as asymptomatic hypopigmented macules over the face with increased incidence seen during summer and rainy season.

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Conflict of interest: None declared

Ethical approval: The study was approved by the institutional ethics committee

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