

Short Communication

Dermatoses reports in Wenchuan districts of Sichuan province after 5.12 earthquake

Sun Renshan*, Zhu Tangyou, Li Chunxue, Chen Hong and Wu Jinjin

Department of Dermatology and Anti-earthquake Medical Team for Daping Hospital, Third Military Medical University, Chongqing 400042, PRC, China.

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After 5.12 earthquakes, we attended one team for medical support at the dermatologic clinic in Wenchuan district of Sichuan province, the centre of the earthquake. The dermatoses were recorded and statistically analyzed. We try to assess different epidemiological and clinical features of the dermatoses in Wenchuan district of Sichuan province after 5.12 earthquakes. Clinical assessment of 947 patients with skin diseases who presented to a dermatology clinic in the people's Hospital of Wenchuan county, Sichuan province of China was done during one month period (July 21, 2008 - August 22, 2008). Of the cases, 73.9% were Qiang people. Papular urticaria was recorded in 23.7% of the cases. One case with condylomata and one case with gonorrhoea urethritis were found. No outbreak of the viral dermatoses such as German measles, or measles occurred. China is a multi-ethnic country. The cases in our results are according with the local residents population characters. We had not found the outbreaks of viral dermatoses, but the skin lesions associated with insects were very common and its incidences were higher than before at the same place and in the same period of one year. The skin diseases induced by insects were papular urticarias, mite dermatitis, phaedrus dermatitis, etc. Our observation results imply that insecticidal work should be highlighted after earthquakes.

Key words: Dermatoses, Wenchuan districts, earthquake.

INTRODUCTION

On May 12, 2008, an earthquake that measured 8.0 on the Richter scale, hit the Chinese province of Sichuan. Within hours of the earthquake, local Communicable Disease Centres had become involved in disaster relief and the national network was used to bring in public-health help from other regions. The Medical Team from the Daping Hospital is the first one to arrive in the epicenter zone. We conduct medical aid activities in the earthquake areas and especially in The People's hospital of Wenchuan county, Sichuan Province. The aim of this work was to evaluate the clinical and epidemiological aspects of dermatoses in Wenchuan districts of Sichuan province after the great earthquake.

METHODS

This observational prospective study was conducted in the out-

patient dermatology clinic in The People's hospital of Wenchuan county, Sichuan Province during one month period from July 21st, 2008 to August 22, 2008. The diagnosis was mainly clinical depending on previous experience with this condition. A detailed history was taken regarding the age, sex, nationality, duration of the condition, the chief complaint, associated symptoms and residency. The morphology, number and location of the lesions were assessed on physical examination. The study followed the ethical and scientific rules of the local scientific committee.

RESULTS

The total number of the patients was 947 patients, 587 (62%) patients were males and 360 (38%) patients were females. The age of the patients ranged from four months to 50 years (mean age 21.3 ± 11.6 years, median age 22 years). Three hundred and forty nine (36.8%) patients were from urban areas, while 598 (63.2%) were the residents from the rural areas. The nationalities of the patients were Qiang (73.9%; $n = 700$), Zhang (12.3%; $n = 116$), Hui (8.3%, $n = 79$) and Han (5.5%; $n = 47$).

Insect dermatitis, tinea pedis and manus, acne, skin trauma, tinea corporis and cruris, seborrheic dermatitis,

*Corresponding author. E-mail: sunyueyue@yahoo.com, pharsunr@126.com. Tel: 86-23-68757595. Fax: 86-23-68757591.

eczema, pityriasis versicolor and lichen simplex chronicus were the nine common dermatoses in the clinic. The prevalence of insect dermatitis and papular urticaria were the highest in all nine common dermatoses. The prevalence of insect dermatitis (include papular urticaria), eczema, acne, skin trauma, tinea, seborrheic dermatitis, lichen simplex chronicus and others were 23.7% (n = 224), 20.2% (n = 191), 19.1% (n = 181), 12.3% (n = 116), 10.2% (n = 97), 7.2% (n = 68), 7.1% (n = 67) and 0.2% (n = 2) respectively. There were two cases with transmitted sexual diseases, one case with condylomata acuminata and one case with gonorrhoea urethritis.

The lesions of papular urticaria presented as erythematous plaques studded with or without vesicles. Scratch marks are more prominent in older lesions. Single lesion was present in 31 (35.6%) patients while multiple lesions were found in 56 (64.4%). Most of the lesions in papular urticaria disappear spontaneously in 1 - 2 weeks leaving mild and transient hyperpigmentation.

DISCUSSION

Wenchuan County (simplified Chinese: 汶川; pinyin: Wènchuan Xiàn) is a county in Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan, China. This county has an area of 4084 square kilometers and a population of 106,119 as of 2005. The major nationalities are Qiang 46%, Han 34% and Tibetan 18.6%. On May 12, 2008, the area was the site of the epicentre and one of the most severely hit areas of the great Sichuan, or Wenchuan earthquake. In Chinese, the earthquake is named after the county, making its name resonate across the nation. Wenchuan County has six towns and seven townships. In our investigation, the percentage of the nationalities was in accordance with local population nationalities characteristics.

In our dermatologic clinic, most patients are Qiang people. They came to see our doctor for itch and lesions same as in our Daping Hospital in Chongqing city. The patients represented common skin disease mostly, such as eczema, dermatitis, urticaria. Since the county is in mountain areas and hot weather; the temperature at that time were 35 ~ 38°C. The incidences of insect dermatitis were very high, especially papular urticaria. The incidences of papular urticaria are higher than before at the same place and in the same period of one year (Jiang et al., 1996). We usually suggest local officials and pa-

tients to pay attentions to insecticidal works greatly. Among patients, we found two cases of sexually transmitted diseases. This partially implied the economical and communication states of Wenchuan county in the western region of Sichuan province.

In the county after earthquake, 15,941 people were dead, 34,583 injured and 7,474 still missing as of June 6, 2008 (Emily, 2008). After the quake, epidemics prevention groups from all over the country immediately arrived in the epicenter zone and conduct water surveillance and environmental protection activities in the earthquake areas, such as sprinkling disinfectant to battle in the front line against epidemic outbreaks. So we found no cases of the viral dermatoses such as German measles, or measles in investigation period.

The successful avoidance of epidemics of infectious disease and provision of basics for public health such as clean water and food were commendable and the efforts of volunteers and local organizations heroic. However, while the immediate rescue and response was managed in a swift and effective manner, the lack of dermatological topical agents in the hospital of disaster areas should warn us for future policy development.

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