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Characterizing Patch Test Findings in African American ACD Patients

Vaibhav Garg, Bruce Brod, Anthony Gaspari*

Introduction: Allergic Contact Dermatitis (ACD) in African Americans has not been well studied, and there is little information related to differences in patterns of ACD between African Americans and Caucasians. This paper aims to investigate relative differences in patterns of sensitization in African American ACD patients.

Methods: This study is a retrospective descriptive study. Data of ACD patients patch tested from 2009-2019 by Dr. Gaspari and Dr. Brod at TJUH and HUP/UPHS were reviewed. Patch test findings for African American and Caucasian patients were compared. Outcomes such as positive allergens, strength, clinical relevance, patient occupation, and personal product use were measured. The exclusion criteria included patients that had undergone patch testing with inconclusive results (technical problem with patch tests, or the patient did not return for all patch test readings).

Results: The total sample size is approximately 450-500 patients, depending on further exclusion. Data analysis of ACD in African American patients (n = 47) is complete, therefore results below pertain only to this subgroup. Gold, nickel, MI/MCI, disperse dyes, PPD, textile dyes, and fragrance mixes were the most common positive allergens. 21 patients had definite clinically relevant reactions, while 6 were probable. The rest were questionable or no relevance. More conclusive data analyses will be reported once the data is complete.

Discussion: Different patterns of allergy may occur due to differing patterns of exposure to personal care products (cultural), genetic susceptibility, and/or healthcare disparities. Addressing this may be useful for preventative purposes and for offering safer alternatives to common allergens.