ABSTRACT

Title of study: The prevalence and pattern of occupational skin disorders among hairdressers in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Background: Hairdressing is a common occupation providing employment and meeting the cosmetic trends of the modern world. It is one of the commonest hazardous occupations with a high rate of contact dermatitis resulting in many practitioners quitting the job. This is accounted for by many factors including: the frequent ‘wet works’ and exposure to a wide range of chemical substances associated with this occupation. Studies have shown that though pre-employment screening, education and adherence to best safety practices can reverse this trend, it is seriously lacking in this profession. Most studies in different parts of the world have been centered on contact dermatitis and its prevalence with little documentation on other skin disorders among hairdressers. Therefore this study sets out to document the prevalence and pattern of occupational skin disorders among hairdressers in this environment.

Objectives: The objectives of this study are to determine the prevalence, describe the clinical features and pattern of occupational skin disorders and identify practices that predispose hairdressers to contact dermatitis and to identify possible allergens that cause contact dermatitis among hairdressers in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Methodology: This was a cross sectional study carried out among hairdressers in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Ibadan, Nigeria and an age and sex matched control group of healthy ward assistants of the University College Hospital Ibadan. A total of 226 hairdressers and 125

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controls were recruited for this study. They were interviewed using a structured questionnaire to obtain information on skin changes and routine hairdressing practices.

Subjects with current or past history of dermatitis were referred to the dermatology unit of the University College Hospital, Ibadan where thorough examination and patch testing was done by the investigator.

Data generated from the study were entered into and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0.

**Results:** The prevalence of occupational skin disorders among hairdressers in this study was 68.13% compared with 28.8% in the controls P-value<0.001. This consisted of nail disorders (32.74% / 8.8%), traumatic skin disorders (28.75% / 17.6%) and hand dermatitis 6.64% / 2.4%) in the hairdressers and controls respectively. Atopy, wet works and frequent contacts with hairdressing chemicals, were significantly associated and predicted the development of hand dermatitis among hairdressers. The use of skin lightening products had an inverse relationship on development of hand dermatitis. The use of hand gloves showed no significant association and did not predict the development of hand dermatitis among hairdressers,

**Conclusion:** The prevalence of occupational skin disorder among hairdressers was high in the study area. To successfully prevent occupational skin disorders among hairdressers in this environment, emphasis should include ensuring early education at the pre-employment stages.