

HEALTH LITERACY AND TOPICAL CORTICOSTEROID ADHERENCE IN PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH ATOPIC DERMATITIS IN FRANCE

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INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES:

Therapeutic nonadherence is frequent amongst the parents of children with atopic dermatitis (AD) treated with topical corticosteroids (TCs)¹. Therapeutic nonadherence is a multidimensional phenomenon involving the interaction of numerous factors, particularly health literacy (HL), that refers to the ability to access, understand, communicate, calculate and process specific information on medicinal products². It is known that low HL can be associated with therapeutic nonadherence in chronic conditions³. A recent study showed that low HL is associated with a higher risk of steroid phobia. However, the description of HL amongst parents of AD children remains limited. Therefore, our study aims to evaluate the prevalence and sociodemographic factors associated with HL in the parents of AD children.

MATERIALS AND METHOD:

A cross-sectional study describing parents of AD children was conducted in France between March and April 2022. A dedicated questionnaire was used to identify parents of AD children from a representative sample of French adults, characterized using the quota method: age, sex, location and socio-professional status. In case of a prescription of topical steroid for the treatment of AD for their child, it was proposed to the parents, a description of their attitude regarding this topical therapy.

RESULTS:

Three populations were identified:

- 1/steroid adherents (SA) who reported following the TCs prescription unquestioningly,
- 2/steroid sceptics (SS) who reported following the prescription after researching TCs, and
- 3/steroid phobes (SP) who reported rejecting the TCs prescription due to fear of its effects.

35.5% (n=5343) of our sample reported living with at least one child under the age of eighteen. Among them 25% (n=1335) reported having a child affecting by AD and/or eczema (21.8% of men vs 29.6% of women).

61.5% (n=822) of these parents reported a prescription of topical steroid for the management of AD for their child. In total, a population of 822 parents of AD children who have received TCs treatment was identified. The mean age of parents was 37.82 y.o +/-10.01 years. In this age group, more than 1 in 2 people have completed higher education, which is consistent with our results with 334 (40.6%) fathers and 488 (59.4%) mothers respectively.

Within the population, 146 parents (17.8%) were identified as steroid phobes.

676 parents (92.2%) demonstrated some health literacy: 90 (10.9%) were identified as steroid sceptics and 586 (71.3%) as steroid adherents. The sociodemographic profile of steroid sceptic parents was not significantly different from steroid adherent parents (Table 1). Compared to steroid sceptic parents, steroid phobe parents were significantly younger (38.37 vs 34.43, p<0.005) and often live in urban areas (78.1% vs 54.4%, p=0.012).

Compared to steroid adherent parents, steroid phobe parents were significantly more often men (54.1% vs 38.4%, p=0.02), younger (34.43 vs 38.58, p<0.001), living in urban areas (78.1% vs 61.3%, p<0.01) and with a recent history of dermatoses (37.7% vs 28.8%, p<0.001). To our knowledge, our study is the first to propose the evaluation of the prevalence of health literacy in a large population of parents of AD children.

Figure 1 Flow chart of identified populations

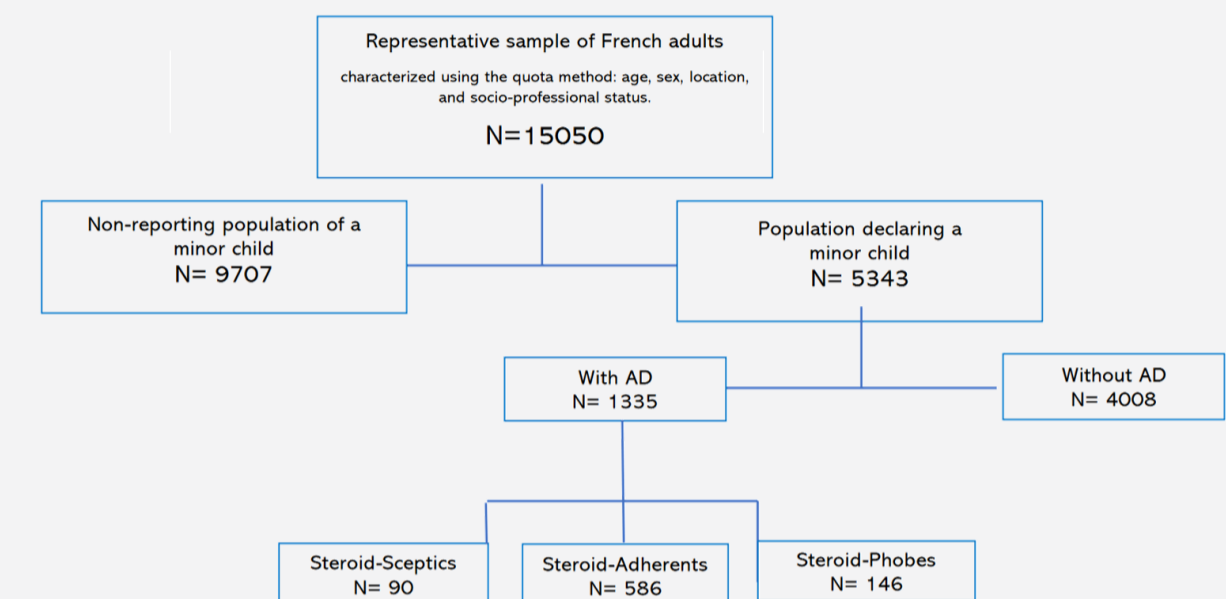


Table 1 Description of the populations

		Steroid sceptics n (%)	Steroid adherents n (%)	Steroid phobes n (%)
Gender	Male	30(33.3%)	225(38.4%)	79(54.1%)
	Female	60(66.7%)	361(61.6%)	67(45.9%)
Socio-professional category	Working	80(88.9%)	526(89.8%)	135(54.9%)
	Not working	10(11.1%)	60(10.2%)	11(45.1%)
Level of education	Primary	1(1.1%)	17(2.9%)	3(2.1%)
	Secondary	36(40.0%)	252(43.0%)	55(37.7%)
	University	53(58.9%)	317(54.1%)	88(60.3%)
Location	Urban	49(54.4%)	359(61.3%)	114(78.1%)
	Rural	41(45.6%)	227(38.7%)	32(21.9%)
Marital status	Lives alone	19(21.1%)	105(17.9%)	37(25.3%)
	In a relationship	70(77.8%)	475(81.1%)	103(70.5%)
	Widowed	1(1.1%)	6(1.0%)	6(4.1%)

DISCUSSION

To our knowledge, our study is the first to propose the evaluation of the prevalence of health literacy in a large population of parents of AD children. Easy access to information [media, social network] on TCs and their side effects, may contribute to increasing fear and concern, heightening the risk of steroid phobia. Therefore, the role of healthcare professionals such as dermatologist and/or General practitioner appears crucial to provide clear and comprehensible information on the disease and how to use the topical therapies prescribed. Patients must also be encouraged, via their organizations, to ask questions and request clarifications in order to ensure that they fully understand their treatment plan. Therapeutic education in atopic dermatitis as well as share decision the also has an essential role to play in the respect and knowledge of the treatments. Health literacy levels should be improved in parents of AD children so that they can better manage their health.

References: 1 Aubert H, Barbarot S. Non-adhésion et corticothérapie [Non adherence and topical steroids]. Ann Dermatol Venerol. 2012 Jan;139 Suppl 1:S7-12. French. doi: 10.1016/S0151-9638(12)70102-3. PMID: 22305285. 2 Larsen MH, Strumse YAS, Borge CR, Osborne R, Andersen MH, Wahl AK. La littératie en santé : une nouvelle pièce du casse-tête dans les soins du psoriasis ? Une étude transversale. F. J Dermatol. 2019 Jun ;180(6):1506-1516. 3 Hyvert S, Yallian AL, Haesebaert J, et al. Association between health literacy and medication adherence in chronic diseases: a recent systematic review. Int J Clin Pharm. 2023 Feb;45(1):38-51. doi: 10.1007/s11096-022-01470-z. Epub 2022 Nov 11. PMID: 36369411.