

## Exfoliative Dermatitis: Study of 40 Cases

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Exfoliative dermatitis is an inflammatory disorder in which erythema and scaling occur in a more or less generalized distribution. A total of 40 clinically diagnosed admitted cases of exfoliative dermatitis in the department of Skin and VD were studied during the period of January 2008 to July 2010. We tried to find the underlying causes of the disease. Psoriasis was found the most common cause of exfoliative dermatitis (35%) followed by atopic dermatitis (20%). Elderly patients 45 years and above were more sufferers (50%) of exfoliative dermatitis. All patients were treated according to the underlying cause.

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**Key words:** Exfoliative dermatitis, psoriasis, atopic, skin

### Introduction

In exfoliative dermatitis, essentially the entire skin is erythematous and scaling. Exfoliative dermatitis is a phenotypic expression of a variety of skin disorders of different causes. Treatment of this condition varies depending on the cause. The recognition of erythroderma is easy but the diagnosis of the underlying cause may be very difficult. The terms exfoliative dermatitis, exfoliative erythroderma and drythroderma are interchangeable all denote mild to severe redness of the skin and scaling. The best clues to the diagnosis are the signs of previously existing skin diseases. In some patients no specific cause can be found. Cases of exfoliative dermatitis are coming to the department of skin and venereal disease in the Dinajpur Medical College Hospital for treatment. This study was designed to find out the underlying causes of exfoliative dermatitis in our population.

### Methods

This study was carried out in the Dermatology Department, Dinajpur Medical College Hospital during the period of January 2008 to July 2010. All patients with exfoliative dermatitis (generalized exfoliation) with or without complication were included in the study. A thorough history was taken from every patient. Pruritus, lymphadenopathy, fever, leg oedema, secondary infection, anaemia, loose motions were noted. Blood for total and differential leukocyte count, estimation hemoglobin, ESR, blood sugar 2 hours after breakfast, VDRL test, X-ray of chest was done in some cases. Aetiology of exfoliative dermatitis was revealed taking through history, by the presence or absences of previous skin disease and the morphology of the disease prior to taking drug(s), age at onset of the disease, chronicity of the disease. Symptoms and signs includes exfoliation, erythema of skin, pruritus, lymphadenopathy, fever, chills, leg oedema, secondary infection, anaemia, and loose motions (enteropathy)

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## Results

A total 40 patients of exfoliative dermatitis were evaluated. A case of exfoliative dermatitis of the study series is shown in the figure 1. Males patients were 33 (82.5%) and females were 7(17.5%). The majority of the patients were found above 45 years (50%) which was followed by age between 31-45 years (25%) is shown in the Table I.



Figure 1. A case of exfoliative dermatitis

Table I: Age distribution (N=40)

Age in years	No. of Patients	%
0-15	5	12.5
16-30	5	12.5
31-45	10	25
45 and above	20	50

Psoriasis was found to be the most common cause of exfoliative dermatitis (35%) followed by atopic dermatitis (20)% which is shown in the Table II.

Table II: Causes of exfoliative dermatitis (N=40)

Cause	No. of Pts	%
Psoriasis	16	40
Atopic dermatitis	9	22.5
Pemphigus folicaceos	6	15
Unknown	4	10
Seborrhic dermatitis	3	7.5
Drug reaction	2	5
Epidermolytic lyperkeratosis	2	5
PRP	1	2.5
Dermatophytes	1	2.5

## Discussion

Of the 40 patients of exfoliative dermatitis we found 33 males (82.5%). Other studies have shown male preponderance of exfoliative dermatitis.<sup>1</sup> In our study we found majority of the patients were above 45 years (50%). Most papers on exfoliative dermatitis show that elderly patients suffer of the disease.<sup>2,3</sup>

Psoriasis was found to be the most common cause of exfoliative dermatitis. In a study of 101 case of exfoliative dermatitis 47 cases (46.53%) were of undetermined cause followed by psoriasis (15.6%).<sup>4</sup> We found 10% cases (46.5%) were of unknown origin. Drugs were the cause of exfoliative dermatitis in 5% of cases. One study showed drugs were the cause of (10.8%) of exfoliative dermatitis.<sup>2</sup>

We did not found any internal malignancy cases such as leukaemia or lymphoma and be a cause of exfoliative dermatitis. Different studies showed 8% to 25% of exfoliative dermatitis are due to lymphoma and leukaemia.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

## Conclusion

Present study was done on small size sample which suggests that male are preponderance of the condition in population and patient above 45 years are more sufferer the younger age groups and psoriasis is the most common

cause of exfoliative dermatitis followed by atopic dermatitis.

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