

Pattern of skin diseases in high altitude of Nepal and role of GPs in its management

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Context: The pattern of skin diseases varies from one location to other. How to provide a quality care in the high-altitude part of Nepal, there has been a subject of debate for policy makers.

Objective:

1. Identify the burden and the role of GPs in the management of skin diseases in the high-altitude region of Nepal.

Design, Participants, Intervention: Mixed method of research design was applied. For quantitative analysis the retrospective data of skin diseases seen by GPs in the high-altitude part of Nepal was collected and analyzed using excel sheet version 16.59. Qualitative data was collected through a zoom focus group discussion with 7 GPs using semi structured guidelines. Discussion was recorded and after transcribing the interview, qualitative analysis was done.

Results: There were total 488 skin disease cases seen by GPs in Jumla, Nepal within a year. Infectious skin diseases conditions (40.5%) were the most common. The most common disease condition was scabies (22.13%) followed by dermatitis (19.05%). More than one fourth of patients (28.48%) were 11-20 years. We found GPs were competent in diagnosing and treating common skin conditions. GPs used a broad spectrum of strategies to diagnose, investigate, treat and refer the skin cases.

Conclusions: Infectious skin conditions were most common skin disease in rural high-altitude part of Nepal. While policy makers consider the challenges of providing to quality of care through respective specialist consultants, GPs are there to diagnose and treat a wide range of skin conditions. Periodic training and courses should be offered to GPs in rural communities to support this common element of practice.