



ACTAS Derma-Sifiliográficas

Full English text available at
www.actasdermo.org



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Differences Between Men and Women in Chronic Scratching: A Psychodermatologic Study in Lichen Simplex Chronicus

R. Martín-Brufau^{a,*}, C. Suso-Ribera^b, C. Brufau Redondo^{c,d}, J. Corbalán Berná^a

^a Faculty of Psychology, University of Murcia, Spain

^b Faculty of Psychology, University of Barcelona, Spain

^c Service of Dermatology, Hospital Reina Sofía, Murcia, Spain

^d Faculty of Medicine, University of Murcia, Spain

Received 2 March 2016; accepted 11 December 2016

KEYWORDS

Pruritus;
Psychiatric
Dermatology;
Psycho-dermatology;
Neurodermitis

Abstract

Introduction: Chronic scratching is common to many skin disorders. Being a female and presenting a high level of psychopathology are risk factors for chronic scratching. Yet, it is unclear why. Certain personality characteristics that are more prevalent in women are also known to influence emotional states (i.e. emotional tension).

Objective: The present study aims to explore whether these personality styles might help understand why gender and emotional distress are associated with scratching.

Material and methods: We compared the personality patterns of 103 patients (69.9% women) diagnosed with Lichen Simplex Chronicus, against a sample of healthy individuals.

Results: Significant differences were found in the personality styles of men and women with LSC. Women were more pessimistic, oriented to fulfil the needs of others, traditional, insecure, submissive, and reserved, with moderate ($d = .43$) to strong ($d = .96$) size effects ranges. Some of these differences, such as in traditionalism, dutifulness, other-orientation, and pessimism, were also observed when compared with healthy men and women, with small ($d = .03$) to moderate ($d = .47$) size effects ranges.

Conclusions: These psychological factors may help explain the mechanisms underlying gender differences in chronic scratching, at least in Lichen Simplex Chronicus. The findings might open new avenues for research and treatment.

© 2017 AEDV. Published by Elsevier España, S.L.U. All rights reserved.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: ramonmail@gmail.com (R. Martín-Brufau).

PALABRAS CLAVE

Prurito;
Dermatología
psiquiátrica;
Psicodermatología;
Neurodermitis

Diferencias de personalidad entre hombres y mujeres con liquen simple crónico. Implicaciones para la conducta de rascado crónico

Resumen

Introducción: El rascado crónico es común a varias enfermedades dermatológicas. Ser mujer y presentar niveles elevados de psicopatología son factores de riesgo para el rascado crónico. Sin embargo, aún se desconoce la causa de esta relación. Ciertas características de personalidad relacionadas con el estrés son más prevalentes en mujeres.

Objetivo: Explorar si los estilos de personalidad pueden explicar las diferencias entre hombres y mujeres en las variables psicológicas asociadas con el rascado crónico.

Material y métodos: Comparamos los perfiles de personalidad de 103 pacientes (69,9% mujeres) diagnosticados de liquen simple crónico y una muestra de sujetos sanos.

Resultados: Se encontraron diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre hombres y mujeres con liquen simple crónico, siendo las mujeres más pesimistas, orientadas a los demás, tradicionales, inseguras, sumisas y reservadas en cuanto a sus emociones negativas, con rangos del tamaño del efecto entre moderados ($d=0,43$) y altos ($d=0,96$). También se encontraron entre la muestra de liquen simple crónico y los controles, como por ejemplo en tradicionalismo, sumisión, orientación al otro y pesimismo, con rangos del tamaño del efecto entre bajos ($d=0,03$) y moderados ($d=0,47$).

Conclusiones: Estos hallazgos podrían ayudar a explicar los mecanismos subyacentes a las diferencias de sexo en rascado crónico, al menos en el liquen simple crónico.

© 2017 AEDV. Publicado por Elsevier España, S.L.U. Todos los derechos reservados.

Introduction

Some dermatologic disorders are characterized by a desire to scratch excessively, which harms the skin and delays its recovery. Researchers have tried to elucidate why excessive scratching occurs. For example, it is known that gender is a risk factor to most dermatologic diseases. Specifically, there are twice as many women with pruritic dermatological diseases compared to men.^{1,2} Also, women scratch more than men² and burning process and itch sensations occur differently than in men, although no differences in specific differential pathways in the primary afferent nerves have been found.³

Together with gender differences in dermatologic diseases, increased evidence has also pointed to the importance of emotional factors in the onset and evolution of dermatologic conditions. For example, experimentally induced negative affect has been associated with increased sensitivity to itch.⁴ Also, perceived stress is known to be a vulnerability factor for dermatological diseases⁵ and itch symptoms.⁶ Research suggests that, as emotional tensions occur, itching and scratching increase.⁷ Congruent with the above, higher rates of emotional problems are found in dermatologic disorders.⁸ For instance, approximately one third of patients with dermatologic disorders also shows signs of psychiatric comorbidities.⁹ Emotional factors might also help understand gender differences in dermatologic diseases. For example, a study with 1037 patients with chronic pruritus revealed that female patients had a greater psychological burden compared to men.² Being a female appears to be related to poorer emotional well being which, in turn, co-occurs with scratching. The question is why do women present more emotional problems and scratch behaviour?

The fact that scratch, emotional disturbance, and gender are related suggests that there might be a common underlying factor. Interestingly, personality styles are independently related to the three. First, emotional reactions and maladaptive behaviour are influenced by personality.¹⁰ In fact, personality styles have proven to be excellent predictors of health-related behaviours and emotional functioning in patients with multiple medical conditions.¹¹⁻¹³ Second, gender differences in personality are well known. For example, research has shown that women are more other-nurturing, hesitating, and submissive than men.¹⁴ Finally, personality differences between patients with chronic itch conditions and healthy individuals have been found.¹⁵ In fact, personality styles are argued to help explain the fluctuations of skin disease by influencing emotional distress and scratching behaviour.¹⁶ Despite the above, it remains unclear whether personality styles can explain the co-occurrence of gender and emotional differences in patients with dermatologic diseases associated with chronic scratching.

Lichen Simplex Chronicus (LSC) is a prototype of a psychodermatologic disorder in which scratching is central. Patients with LSC cause or maintain inflammation (lichenification) of the skin by continuous and intense scratching, which in turn increases itch. Congruent with most psychodermatologic conditions, there are more women than men with LSC.⁷ Also, this disease is associated with increased psychopathology.¹⁷ In fact, its association with psychological factors is such that some psychodermatologists suggest that LSC is an emotional disorder with skin manifestations.¹⁸

The objective of the present investigation is to test whether personality styles can help to understand the higher prevalence of women and emotional problems in Lichen Simplex Chronicus, a dermatologic disease caused

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5644159>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5644159>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)