



Characterization of socioeconomic status of Japanese patients with atopic dermatitis showing poor medical adherence and reasons for drug discontinuation



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ABSTRACT

Background: Patients' high adherence to medication is indispensable for the management of skin diseases including atopic dermatitis. We previously showed poor medication adherence in Japanese dermatological patients.

Objective: This study was conducted to determine the level of adherence to oral or topical medication in Japanese patients with atopic dermatitis, attempting to characterize the socioeconomic status of those patients with poor adherence.

Methods: A web questionnaire survey on demographic data as well as adherence level was conducted on patients registered in the monitoring system. Adherence level was assessed with Morisky Medication Adherence Scale-8 (MMAS-8). Among a total of 3096 respondents with dermatological disorders, data of 1327 subjects with atopic dermatitis were extracted and analyzed.

Results: More than 80% of subjects felt that both oral and topical medications were safe and efficacious, while less than 60% of them were satisfied with their treatment. Levels of adherence to oral and topical

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treatments were evaluated with MMAS-8, giving scores of 4.6 and 4.2, respectively. Demographic factors such as gender, marital status, state of employment, alcohol consumption, frequency of hospital visits, and experience of drug effectiveness had a significant impact on the degree of adherence to treatment. **Conclusion:** Medication adherence level in Japanese subjects with atopic dermatitis was relatively low compared with that of other chronic diseases. Our survey has characterized patients with poor adherence, who are good targets for interventions to maximize potentially limited healthcare resources.

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1. Introduction

In the management of skin diseases, not only the prescription of appropriate drugs by clinicians but also the enhancement of patient adherence to medication is important. Recent studies highlighted poor adherence to medication in patients with chronic inflammatory diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes, and inflammatory bowel diseases [1–3]. A low level of motivation to adhere to medication has also been reported in patients with atopic dermatitis [4], psoriasis [5], urticaria [6], and acne [7].

Previously, we assessed the adherence to oral and topical medications using a translated Japanese version of Morisky Medication Adherence Scale-8 (MMAS-8) in 3096 Japanese subjects with skin diseases including atopic dermatitis, urticaria, psoriasis, and tinea [8]. In that study, adherence level was classified as high, medium, or low according to the MMAS-8 score [8]. We found that the overall high, medium, and low adherence rates were 9.5%, 24.2%, and 66.3% for oral medication, and 6.9%, 17.7%, and 75.5% for topical medication, indicating poor adherence to medication in patients with skin diseases. In the current study,

Table 1
Demographic data of study subjects with atopic dermatitis ($n = 1327$).

Characteristics		<i>n</i>	(%)	
Age, mean (SD) [min–max], years		41.3 (11.1) [18–85]		
Gender	Male	559	42.1	
	Female	768	57.9	
Marital state	Married	597	45	
	Unmarried	730	55	
Annual income	≥6 million yen	411	37.1	
	<6 million yen	696	62.9	
Employment	Employed	877	69.4	
	Unemployed	387	30.6	
Education	University graduate	670	50.6	
	Not university graduate	653	49.4	
Smoking	Smoker	227	17.2	
	Non-smoker	1094	82.8	
Alcohol	≥Once a month	773	58.5	
	<Once a month	548	41.5	
Frequency of hospital visits	≥Once a half year	1226	92.4	
	<Once a half year or unknown	101	7.6	
Main healthcare institution	University hospital	58	4.4	
	Municipal hospital	216	16.4	
	Private clinic or other	1044	79.2	
Oral medication	Experience of drug effectiveness	Yes	720	78.3
		No	199	21.7
	Experience of adverse events	Yes	163	17.7
		No	756	82.3
Topical medication	Experience of drug effectiveness	Yes	1158	89.6
		No	134	10.4
	Experience of adverse events	Yes	247	19.1
		No	1045	80.9
Overall satisfaction to treatment	≥Satisfied	749	56.4	
	<Satisfied	578	43.6	
Adherence, mean (SD) [min–max]	Oral medication	4.6 (2.0) [0–8]		
	Topical medication	4.2 (2.0) [0–8]		
Cronbach's Alpha of adherence measure	Oral medication	0.712		
	Topical medication	0.706		

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