

## MEDICAL SCIENCES

### RISK OF CONTACT DERMATITIS IN HEALTHCARE WORKERS

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**Relevance.** It is very important for healthcare workers to protect themselves from infections and to prevent infectious complications among patients. However, with the advent of antiseptics and personal protective equipment, a new problem arose – contact dermatitis, which can significantly impair the quality of life.

**Aim.** To investigate the risks of contact dermatitis in healthcare workers, the existing symptoms and their awareness of treatment and methods of prevention.

**Materials and methods.** A survey was created on the Google Forms platform, in which 144 doctors and medical students participated, including 120 (83.3%) women and 24 (16.7%) men aged 18 to 50 years. The obtained results were processed using Google Sheets.

**Results and discussion.** The respondents were asked about their awareness of the causes and symptoms of contact dermatitis: 81 (56.3%) people answered that they are aware of the risks and try to prevent the disease, 32 (22.2%) – have information, but do nothing for prevention, 31 (21.5 %) – never thought about it. 11 (7.6%) people noted that their hands are in gloves for no more than 15 minutes a day, 8 (5.6%) – for no more than 30 minutes, 27 (18.8%) – for no more than an hour, 73 (50.7%) – for 1.5 hours or more, the other 25 people (17.4%) do not use gloves. 30 people (20.8%) disinfect their hands with an antiseptic up to 2 times a day, 37 (25.7%) – 3-5 times, 68 (47.2%) – 5 or more times. Most of the respondents observed changes in the skin of certain areas after contact with the irritants: in 84 (58.3%) – on the palms and the back surface of the hands; in 3 (2.1%) – on the forearm; in 2 (1.4%) – on the fingers and between them. At the same time, 68 people (47.2%) believe that these changes were caused by an antiseptic, 17 (11.8%) – latex, and 10 (6.9%) – talc.

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The following symptoms worsened the quality of life of the respondents the most: itching (42 people – 29.2%), redness (32 – 22.2%), pain when in contact with an irritant (15 – 10.4%) and swelling (1 – 0.7%). When symptoms appeared, only 9 people (6.25%) consulted a doctor, 45 (31.3%) treated themselves, and 39 (27.1%) did nothing. We asked respondents whether they use any skin care products and received 101 (70.1%) positive responses and 43 (29.9%) negative responses. Out of 101 people, 84 (83.2%) said that these tools helped them, and 15 (14.9%) said that they did not. We asked those who were helped by these means to specify which means: 15 (17.9%) people answered that it could be any cream, 24 (28.6%) noted the effectiveness of moisturizing creams in particular, 21 people (25%) noted other means, such as corticosteroids, cream with vitamin B5, anti-inflammatory ointments. Answers to the question "Do you know how to reduce the risk of dermatitis?" were as follows: 54 (37.5%) – yes, 31 (21.5%) – no, 59 (41%) – not sure. The respondents use the following methods to prevent dermatitis: reducing exposure to irritants, washing hands without soap after contact with an irritant, hand skin care, fabric gloves under latex gloves, use of nitrile gloves instead of latex gloves and high-quality soft antiseptics.

**Conclusions.** The survey showed that the majority of healthcare workers have information about the risks of contact dermatitis and are able to recognize the symptoms of this disease, but the percentage of people who use this knowledge in practice for prevention is slightly lower. The problem of contact dermatitis among healthcare workers is indeed widespread, as most respondents wear gloves for longer than 1.5 hours and treat their hands with an antiseptic 5 or more times a day. The most frequent location of the rash was the skin on the palms and the back of the hands, and the most common symptoms were itching, redness, and pain upon contact with the irritant. It was found that among the irritants that can cause contact dermatitis, antiseptics are in the first place. When symptoms appear, very few respondents seek help from a doctor, most try to cope on their own, using moisturizing creams, vitamin products or anti-inflammatory ointments. For the prevention of contact dermatitis, moisturizing creams and hand washing after contact with an irritant are most popular, and there are also cases of using additional fabric gloves under latex ones, or replacing latex gloves with nitrile ones.