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Ethnicity in Mycosis Fungoides: White patients present at an older age and with more advanced disease

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Dear Editor,

We read with interest this relevant report of 88 African Americans presenting with a younger age at diagnosis (47 years), a female predominance 1.4:1 and a high rate of stage IB patients (67.0%) from your Memorial Sloane Kettering Cancer Centre [1]. This differs from the recently published cohort of 348 confirmed early-stage MF PROCLIFI patients with a median age at diagnosis of 57 years, a male predominance of 1.7:1 and 42.8% presenting with IB [2]. We did not report ethnicity in this publication, which is being collected. This is because the data was incomplete (55.2% complete). Due to legal restraints in some countries IRB approval for recording ethnicity was not granted. Ethnicity was recorded in 192/348 patients; 82.8% were reported as White (median age at diagnosis 61yrs), 3.6% Black (47yrs), 5.2% Asian (42yrs) and 8.3% Mixed Race (56yrs). Because of the small numbers of non-White patients, meaningful comparisons cannot be made but there appeared to be a trend in younger age. There was no statistical difference in stage at presentation or gender ratio.

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PROCLIFI is recruiting all new diagnosis of MF/SS. 1157 patients have been recruited; 854 early and 303 late-stage, from 47 sites in 19 countries across 6 continents. 653 PROCLIFI patients have had their ethnicity recorded. This includes 550 White (84.2%), 21 Black (3.8%), 25 Asian (3.8%), and 57 Mixed Race patients (8.7%). Due to small numbers of non-White ethnic groups the comparisons have been made between White (n=550) and non-White (n=103) patients. There was a significant difference between early versus late stage presentation with 92.2% of non-White patients presenting in early-stage compared to 79.8% of white patients (p=0.027). There was a predominance of hypopigmented MF in non-White patients occurring in 21.4% and 3.1% respectively p<0.0001. Whether this represents a real racial difference in hypopigmented MF or that it's more readily diagnosed in darker skin types is not known. There was a trend towards Black patients presenting with T2 disease (>10% body surface area involved) at 71.4% compared to the non-Black group at 40.1%. The median age at presentation was significantly older in the White group at 61.5yrs (IQR=51-71) compared to others; Black=52yrs (IQR=39-58), Asian=45yrs (IQR=30-63), Mixed Race=53yrs (IQR=42-62), p=0.0001. There doesn't appear to be a statistical difference in gender across the racial groups p=0.274 and the male:female ratio of this cohort was 1.7:1 which is similar to the entire PROCLIFI patients.

In conclusion our PROCLIFI data suggests that White patients may present at an older age and with more advanced stages of disease but larger patient numbers will be needed to substantiate this.

Reference

1 To be added

2 JJ Scarisbrick, P Quaglino, HM Prince, et al. The PROCLIFI international registry of early stage mycosis fungoides identifies substantial diagnostic delay in most patients. Br J Dermatol. 2018 epub

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