Quality of Life Impact of Primary Focal Hyperhidrosis: Qualitative Focus Results in Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults

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Background

- Hyperhidrosis is defined as uncontrollable and excessive sweat production beyond what is necessary to maintain thermal regulation.
- Primary focal hyperhidrosis affects an estimated 4.5% of the total U.S. population and is characterized by excessive sweating of designated areas. A recent survey found 6.6% of the total U.S. population to have hyperhidrosis, with nearly 72% reporting a quality of life impact as leading to major or moderate daily impairments.
- Hyperhidrosis is understood to be managed as a chronic medical condition.

Methods

- Data Collection: Data were collected during in-person interviews or small focus groups conducted in 2019 in Atlanta, Georgia.
- Participants: Participants included 13 children (6-13 years), including one set of twins, and 12 caregivers (ages 14-17 years) with primary focal hyperhidrosis. The caregivers were either parents or siblings of the children with hyperhidrosis.

Results

- In total, 25 participants ages 6-17 years participated in the study (61% female). The most common sites affected were the palms (61%), back (61%), and inguinal (18%) regions.
- Participants reported a high level of bother due to hyperhidrosis, with 63% reporting a significant impact on quality of life. The most common experiences included feeling uncomfortable and difficulties in daily activities such as drinking, bathing, and clothing/bedding.
- The most common effects due to hyperhidrosis were increased anxiety, new stressors, and increased discomfort. A significant majority of participants (76.2%) reported changes in their mobility or ability to participate in daily activities.
- Participants reported various coping strategies to deal with hyperhidrosis, including humor, denial, and acceptance.

Conclusion

- This study highlights the significant impact of hyperhidrosis on the daily lives of children and caregivers. The results underscore the need for targeted interventions to improve quality of life and reduce the burden of hyperhidrosis in this understudied population.

References


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