Improving pediatric atopic dermatitis care: online intervention in the Deep South

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Introduction/Background: Atopic dermatitis (AD) affects about 9.6 million children in the United States (US) under the age of 18. Most of these young people have moderate-to-severe AD symptoms, which have a significant negative impact on their own and their families' quality of life. Preventing triggers, repairing the skin's protective layer, and reducing inflammation are the main goals of effective AD treatment. Even though medical experts play a crucial role in teaching parents about managing AD, many caregivers struggle to follow treatment plans, which results in preventable flare-ups.

Objectives: The purpose of this study was twofold: firstly, to assess the efficacy of an intervention aimed at enhancing healthcare professionals' confidence and practices in managing AD; and secondly, to pinpoint areas for improvement to better assist parents in navigating their children's chronic illness.

Methods: The study involved the recruitment of 37 healthcare workers from a large university medical center located in the deep South of the United States using email and word-of-mouth. The medical professionals watched a 20-minute YouTube movie, conducted an online pre-test survey, and then completed an online post-test survey.

Results: The majority of participants (68.6%) identified as female, and the largest racial group was White (59.4%). The participant pool encompassed residents, fellows, or trainees (40.5%),
physicians (37.8%), and advanced practice providers (10.8%), with an average age of 39.74 years. The findings indicated an improvement in participants' confidence to prescribe new therapies and educate patients about self-management behaviors for AD. Additionally, more respondents felt capable of offering resources to aid their patients' self-management and mobilizing social support for this purpose.

Conclusions: In the era of new targeted therapies, this online intervention presents an opportunity to bolster healthcare professionals' confidence and refine their practices in managing AD, potentially yielding enhanced outcomes for children and their families.

Keywords: atopic dermatitis, education, eczema, training, competency

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