

Study quantifies costs, utilization, access to care for patients with eczema

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Adults with the common chronic skin condition eczema had higher out-of-pocket health care costs, more lost workdays, poorer overall health, more health care utilization and impaired access to care compared to adults without eczema, according to an article published online by *JAMA Dermatology*.

The prevalence of adult eczema (or atopic dermatitis, AD) is estimated to be about 10.2 percent in U.S. [adults](#) and similarly about 10.7 percent in U.S. children. However, little is known about the direct and [indirect costs](#) of adult eczema and recent cost estimates for the disease are lacking, according to the study background.

Jonathan I. Silverberg, M.D., Ph.D, M.P.H., of the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, examined those [costs](#) by analyzing data from two population-based studies between 2010 and 2012 that surveyed 27,157 and 34,613 adults, respectively.

The study results show that adults with eczema paid more than \$37.7 billion and \$29.3 billion in out-of-pocket [health care costs](#) in 2010 and 2012, respectively (an average of \$371 and \$489 per person-year). Adults with eczema also were more likely to have six or more lost workdays due to any cause than those adults without eczema, and having eczema was associated with increased odds of physician visits, urgent care or emergency department visits, and hospitalizations. There also were differences in access to care, including adults with eczema being unable to afford prescription medications and having higher odds of

delayed care because they cannot get a medical appointment soon enough, reach a physician's office or having to wait too long to see a physician. Adults with eczema also were more likely to have delayed care or no care because of worry about the related costs, according to the results.

"This study demonstrates that adults with eczema have a major health burden with significantly increased health care utilization and costs. Future studies are needed to identify the determinants of [health care](#) utilization and access in adults with [eczema](#)," the study concludes.

More information: *JAMA Dermatology*. Published online march 4, 2015. [DOI: 10.1001/jamadermatol.2014.5432](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamadermatol.2014.5432)

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