Review Article

Chronic urticaria in children

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Urticaria is a fairly common paediatric disorder. The prevalence was reported to be 2.1-6.7%. Management of chronic urticaria in children can be challenging. A good clinical assessment with appropriate investigations will lead to a correct diagnosis. This article is a broad review of the approaches to assess and manage chronic urticaria in children.

Keywords: Angio-oedema, histamine H₁ antagonists, urticaria

Introduction

Urticaria is derived from the Latin word 'urere' meaning 'to burn'. Urticaria usually manifests as a transient, itchy, polymorphic skin eruption. The disease has been recognised as a distinct disease entity for more than two thousand years. However, even now, the pathogenesis is still not fully understood.

Epidemiology

Boys and girls seem to be equally affected by chronic urticaria. In a retrospective study by Harris, sex distribution was equal in 94 children under 16 years old with chronic urticaria in United States.¹ This is even higher than the prevalence in adult population (0.05-0.5%).¹ By definition, chronic urticaria can persist longer than 6 weeks. Chronic urticaria is found less often in children in comparison to acute urticaria.²

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