Black Children Less Likely to Get Treatment for Eczema

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Eczema, a broad term for several different types of rashes that affect the skin, is more severe in minorities than in their white or Hispanic counterparts. But Black youngsters are less likely to see a doctor for treatment for the itchy, inflammatory skin disease, suggest new findings published in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology, reports EurekAlert!

For the study, researchers collected data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, the most complete source of information on the cost and use of medical care and health insurance coverage. Next, scientists pinpointed 2,043 Americans under age 18 who suffer from eczema and identified as white, Black or Hispanic and estimated the data on a national scale. Based on these calculations, of the nearly 3 million American kids with eczema, 66 percent were white, 18 percent Black and 16 percent Hispanic.

Researchers found that overall about 60 percent of these children saw a doctor for their condition. But percentages varied by race: 62.1 percent of white kids visited a physician for their eczema followed by 58.1 percent of Hispanic children and 51.9 percent of Black youngsters. After researchers accounted for baseline differences in socio-demographic factors such as age, race, ethnicity, language and insurance status, Black kids were 30 percent less likely to get treated by a doctor for the condition.

In addition, scientists noted that minority children with eczema were on average a year to a year and a half younger, less likely to have private insurance, more likely to be of low-income status and more likely to have asthma than their white peers.

“While the study is not without its limitations, our findings suggest there are barriers to health care for eczema among Black children irrespective of income and insurance status, despite likely having more severe skin disease,” said Junko Takeshita, MD, PhD, an assistant professor of dermatology and epidemiology at the University of Pennsylvania and the study’s senior author.

Takeshita suggested that to eliminate these disparities further research is needed to determine what the obstacles are and why they exist.

Click here to learn why obese Black children are more liable than similar white kids to develop hypertension.

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