

Specific dermatoses and atopic dermatitis in pregnancy: research advances and controversies

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Specific dermatoses of pregnancy have been classified into herpes (pemphigoid) gestationis, polymorphic eruption of pregnancy (PEP), pruritic folliculitis (PFP) and prurigo of pregnancy (PP). A recent reclassification that included PP, PFP and atopic dermatitis (AD) under a proposed new specific dermatoses ("atopic eruption of pregnancy", AEP) has been debated. Two studies indicated a high incidence of AD in gestation, especially "new eczema" (eczema presenting during gestation for the first time), but the inclusion of maternal serum IgE measurements (uncontrolled) in the diagnostic criteria for AEP may have contributed to an overestimated prevalence of "new eczema" (80% of all eczema cases) in pregnancy, especially since IgE regulation in pregnancy remains unknown. Although there is evidence of clinical overlap between specific dermatoses (PP, PFP) and AEP, there is insufficient data to classify PP and PFP under AEP (25% of PP patients do not satisfy criteria for AD). These associations cannot be verified before the diagnostic criteria for gestational eczema are refined. Another study indicated that it is more the "intrinsic" than the "extrinsic" (IgE-associated) eczema that is affected by pregnancy. The etiopathogenesis of gestational eczema may not be centered solely around IgE-related mechanisms, and other factors may play a role. The role of environmental allergens, stress, and skin barrier changes in gestational eczema needs to be investigated, as well as the postpartum prognosis of eczematous gestational eruptions. Maternal/fetal risks related to specific dermatoses have been further studied, and an association of PEP with cesarean section has been reported.

Biography

Dr. Kroumpouzos is Clinical Assistant Professor of Dermatology at Brown Medical School, and has served on the Faculty at Harvard Medical School. After receiving MD and PhD degrees from the Athens University School of Medicine, he pursued research fellowships in immunology and molecular biology at The Free University of Berlin and National Cancer Institute, NIH, and then completed dermatology residency training at Boston and Tufts Universities. Dr. Kroumpouzos is on the Editorial Board of reputed dermatology journals, has served as a reviewer for 7 journals, and is a fellow of numerous dermatological societies. He has authored more than 40 articles and book chapters. He has been honoured by Brown University, New England Dermatological Society, and European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology, and has been the recipient of several honors and awards, including awards by the International Union against Cancer.