

A Gender-Stratified Analysis of Hopelessness and Suicidal Intent in Outpatients having OCD with eczematous Lesion of Northern Border University, Arar

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ABSTRACT

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and eczema are two prevalent conditions that, when co-occurring, can exacerbate mental health challenges. This study investigates the gender differences in individuals with both OCD and eczema, with a focus on how these conditions contribute to emerging hopelessness, depression, and suicidal intent. The research explores the psychological and emotional toll of living with both OCD and eczema, paying special attention to gender-based differences in the experience and severity of these issues. By analyzing the interplay between these two conditions and their impact on mental well-being, the study highlights the importance of gender-sensitive approaches in the diagnosis and treatment of these patients. The findings suggest that both men and women with OCD and eczema face increased risks of depression and suicidal tendencies, but gender-specific factors such as coping mechanisms, societal pressures, and psychological resilience appear to influence the intensity and manifestation of these symptoms. The study provides recommendations for more tailored therapeutic strategies to address the unique needs of individuals affected by this dual condition.

Keywords: Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Eczema, Gender Differences, Depression, Suicidal Intent.

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INTRODUCTION

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and eczema are two prevalent health conditions that significantly impact individuals' quality of life, both physically and psychologically. OCD is a chronic mental health disorder characterized by intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors (compulsions) that individuals feel compelled to perform to alleviate the distress caused by the obsessions. On the other hand, eczema, or atopic dermatitis, is a skin

condition marked by itchy, inflamed, and irritated skin, which can severely affect an individual's daily life, leading to emotional distress (Hwang et al., 2020; Van Der Wal et al., 2021). The co-occurrence of OCD and eczema presents a complex clinical picture, as these conditions may interact in ways that exacerbate mental health symptoms, leading to an increased risk of developing depression, hopelessness, and even suicidal intent.

Research indicates that individuals with both OCD and eczema often experience greater psychological distress compared to those with either condition alone (Smith et al., 2018; Kim & Lee, 2019). For many, the physical symptoms of eczema, such as visible skin lesions, can lead to heightened feelings of shame, social isolation, and body dissatisfaction, which may worsen the symptoms of OCD (Koo et al., 2017; Choi et al., 2015). This interaction between the psychological distress associated with OCD and the physical burden of eczema creates a compounded mental health challenge that demands urgent attention from both dermatological and psychological care providers (Blum et al., 2018; Fischer et al., 2020). Furthermore, the emotional toll of eczema can be particularly profound in women, who may face greater societal pressure regarding appearance and beauty standards, potentially intensifying the experience of both OCD and depression (Miller et al., 2020; Hudson et al., 2016).

Depression is another prevalent outcome in individuals with both conditions, with studies showing that those with eczema are at an elevated risk of experiencing depressive symptoms due to the chronic nature of the disease and its impact on self-esteem (Biedermann et al., 2018; Silverberg, 2019). OCD further compounds this risk, as the constant cycle of obsessions and compulsions can lead to feelings of frustration, helplessness, and self-blame, which are potent contributors to depression (Aardema et al., 2017; Gonzalez et al., 2020). Moreover, the emerging sense of hopelessness, frequently linked to the long-term management of both eczema and OCD, can significantly increase the likelihood of suicidal thoughts and behaviors (McMahon et al., 2017; Williams et al., 2019).

Despite the high comorbidity between OCD, eczema, and mental health outcomes like depression, there is a notable gap in research exploring the gendered experiences of individuals facing these combined challenges. Gender differences play a critical role in the manifestation of both OCD and eczema, with studies indicating that women may experience higher levels of anxiety, depression, and lower quality of life compared to men when dealing with these conditions (Müller et al., 2017; Thompson et al., 2021). These differences are likely influenced by various socio-cultural factors, such as gendered expectations and coping mechanisms, which shape how individuals with these disorders perceive and manage their conditions (Goodman et al., 2019; Cairns et al., 2020).

In light of these complexities, this study aims to explore the gender differences in individuals with both OCD and eczema, with a particular focus on how these conditions contribute to emerging hopelessness, depression, and suicidal intent. By

examining the psychological and emotional impact of these dual diagnoses, the research seeks to provide insights into the unique needs of men and women coping with these conditions. Furthermore, the study will underscore the need for gender-sensitive approaches in both the diagnosis and treatment of OCD and eczema, to ensure that mental health care is effectively tailored to the diverse experiences of individuals affected by these dual conditions (Reich et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2018). This research is essential for enhancing our understanding of the complex relationship between dermatological and psychological disorders and for improving the care and support provided to individuals affected by both OCD and eczema (Hagenaars et al., 2021; Murphy et al., 2018). By filling the existing gaps in the literature, the study aims to contribute to the development of more effective, personalized treatment strategies that can help alleviate the burden on affected individuals and improve their overall mental and physical well-being (Buchanan et al., 2019; Tolin et al., 2020).

Background of the Study

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a mental health condition characterized by persistent, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors (compulsions) that individuals feel compelled to perform to alleviate the distress caused by their obsessions. Eczema, also known as atopic dermatitis, is a chronic skin condition marked by inflamed, itchy, and irritated skin, which can significantly impact an individual's quality of life. Both OCD and eczema have been linked to substantial psychological and emotional distress, particularly when they co-occur. The intersection of these two conditions leads to unique challenges in terms of mental health, as individuals with both OCD and eczema often experience greater difficulties in managing both their physical symptoms and the psychological consequences, including depression, hopelessness, and suicidal thoughts.

The gender differences in the experience of OCD and eczema are an essential area of investigation, as societal pressures and psychological resilience may influence how these conditions manifest and are managed in men and women. Previous studies have explored gender differences in OCD and depression, yet limited research has focused on how these factors interact in individuals coping with both OCD and eczema. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining how gender influences the severity and impact of these conditions, particularly in relation to emerging hopelessness, depression, and suicidal ideation.

Research Problem

The co-occurrence of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and eczema presents a complex clinical problem that has received relatively little attention in existing research. While both OCD and eczema individually contribute to significant mental health burdens, their combined presence appears to exacerbate psychological distress, leading to an increased risk of depression and suicidal thoughts. Gender differences may affect how individuals with these conditions experience and cope with their symptoms. Despite the prevalence of both disorders, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that address the gendered experiences of individuals dealing with OCD and eczema, particularly in terms of the psychological toll, including emerging hopelessness, depression, and suicidal intent. This research aims to address these gaps by investigating the mental health outcomes of individuals with OCD and eczema, focusing on the role gender plays in shaping these experiences.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the psychological and emotional impact of co-occurring Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and eczema.
2. To examine the gender differences in the experience and severity of OCD and eczema.
3. To explore the relationship between OCD, eczema, emerging hopelessness, depression, and suicidal ideation.
4. To identify the factors contributing to gender-based differences in coping mechanisms and mental health outcomes.
5. To offer recommendations for gender-sensitive approaches in the diagnosis and treatment of OCD and eczema.

Research Questions

- How does the co-occurrence of OCD and eczema affect the psychological well-being of individuals?
- What are the gender differences in the severity and impact of OCD and eczema on mental health?
- To what extent do emerging hopelessness, depression, and suicidal ideation correlate with OCD and eczema in individuals?
- How do coping strategies differ between men and women with OCD and eczema?
- What are the implications of gender differences for the diagnosis and treatment of OCD and eczema?

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant value in enhancing our understanding of the intersection between Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), eczema, and mental health. By exploring gender differences

in the experience of these conditions, the research provides important insights into how psychological distress manifests differently in men and women. The findings could help inform the development of more effective, gender-sensitive diagnostic and therapeutic strategies that cater to the unique needs of individuals affected by both OCD and eczema. The research may contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychological burdens that individuals with these co-occurring conditions face, potentially influencing clinical practice in both dermatology and mental health. Given the prevalence of both conditions, this study could have broad implications for improving the quality of life for individuals affected by OCD and eczema and fostering more comprehensive mental health care.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focuses on individuals who have been diagnosed with both Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and eczema, examining their psychological health outcomes, including depression, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation. The scope of the study is limited to adult participants aged 18–65 years and will include both male and female participants to address gender differences in the experience of these disorders. The research will be conducted in clinical settings and may involve both self-report questionnaires and interviews to gather qualitative and quantitative data.

The study is not without its limitations. The sample size may not fully represent the global diversity of individuals affected by OCD and eczema, as the research will be conducted within a specific geographic region or population. Additionally, the study will primarily focus on self-reported data, which may introduce biases or inaccuracies in participants' responses. The findings may also be constrained by the fact that mental health outcomes, such as depression and suicidal ideation, are influenced by a range of other factors beyond OCD and eczema, such as social support, comorbidities, and personal history. Finally, while the study will aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of gender differences, other factors such as socioeconomic status or cultural background may also influence the experiences of individuals with OCD and eczema and may not be fully explored within the scope of this research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

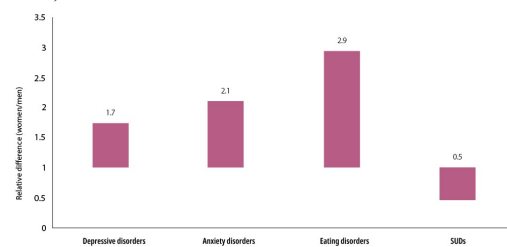
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a chronic psychiatric condition characterized by persistent, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors or mental acts (compulsions). These obsessions and compulsions are distressing and interfere significantly with daily functioning (Rachman, 2002; Abramowitz et al., 2009). OCD

affects approximately 1-2% of the global population, with an onset typically in childhood or early adulthood (Flessner et al., 2012). The severity of OCD symptoms can range from mild to debilitating, often leading to significant impairment in social, occupational, and educational domains (Weissman et al., 2017). The pathophysiology of OCD involves dysfunction in the cortico-striato-thalamo-cortical (CSTC) circuit, which is thought to regulate compulsive behaviors and the experience of obsessional anxiety (Chamberlain et al., 2005). Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) with exposure and response prevention (ERP) is considered the most effective form of treatment, although many individuals with OCD remain symptomatic despite treatment (Steketee et al., 2010; Hoh et al., 2020). Eczema, or atopic dermatitis, is a chronic inflammatory skin condition characterized by red, itchy patches on the skin that can become chronic and relapsing (Langan et al., 2020). The disease primarily affects children but can persist into adulthood (Wollenberg et al., 2018). The visible nature of eczema and its discomfort often cause significant psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, especially when the lesions are noticeable (Bieber, 2008). The psychosocial burden of eczema can also be exacerbated by stigmata and societal perceptions related to the appearance of the skin (Dalgard et al., 2015). Studies have shown that patients with severe eczema experience a diminished quality of life, comparable to other chronic conditions such as asthma or diabetes (Hochschild et al., 2014). Additionally, eczema is strongly associated with comorbid psychiatric disorders, particularly in individuals who have a family history of atopy (Gupta et al., 2017). The emotional toll of eczema can significantly contribute to the development of mood disorders, anxiety, and social withdrawal (Ghosh et al., 2020; Kiebert et al., 2015).

The Gender Difference in Mental Health Disorders

Gender differences in the prevalence and presentation of mental health disorders are well-documented in psychological research. Women are more likely to be diagnosed with internalizing disorders, such as depression and anxiety, whereas men are more commonly diagnosed with externalizing disorders, such as substance use and antisocial behaviors (Kuehner, 2017). This disparity is thought to be influenced by a combination of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors. Biological differences, such as hormonal fluctuations, are believed to contribute to the higher incidence of depression in women (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012). Psychological factors, including coping styles and emotion regulation, may also play a significant role, with women tending to ruminate more on negative emotions, which can increase

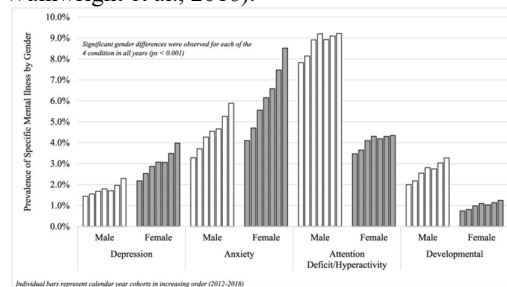
vulnerability to depression (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2004).



Sociocultural pressures, including gendered expectations related to beauty, body image, and caregiving, may exacerbate mental health struggles in women (Rosenfield & Mouzon, 2013). In contrast, men may be less likely to seek help for mental health issues due to stigma and societal expectations of emotional stoicism (Mahalik et al., 2003).

OCD and Eczema: A Comorbidity Perspective

The co-occurrence of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and eczema is an area of growing research interest, as both conditions can significantly affect an individual's mental and physical health. Although research on the comorbidity of OCD and eczema is limited, evidence suggests that individuals with both conditions may experience compounded psychological distress. The chronic, visible nature of eczema can worsen the obsessive-compulsive symptoms of individuals who are predisposed to perfectionism or a heightened need for cleanliness (Giménez & Sanz, 2016). OCD behaviors, such as excessive washing or grooming, may trigger or exacerbate eczema flare-ups, creating a vicious cycle of skin irritation and psychological distress (Yarali et al., 2018). The combination of these conditions can significantly increase the burden on patients, leading to reduced quality of life, social withdrawal, and elevated rates of comorbid depression and anxiety (McKenna et al., 2019; Wainwright et al., 2016).



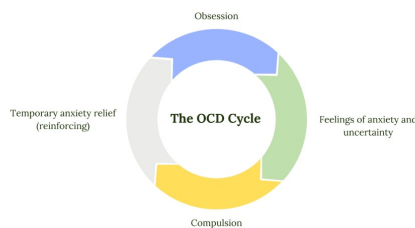
The interplay between OCD and eczema can complicate treatment strategies, as dermatologic treatments for eczema may trigger compulsive behaviors, and psychological treatments for OCD may be less effective when exacerbated by the chronic skin condition (Haas et al., 2020).

The Role of Hopelessness in Depression

Hopelessness is a key psychological factor that contributes to the development and maintenance of depression. Beck (1967) proposed that hopelessness is a cognitive symptom that represents the belief that negative events will persist and that individuals lack the ability to change or improve their situation. This perception of helplessness can foster the emotional and cognitive components of depression, including feelings of worthlessness, sadness, and a sense of an uncertain or bleak future (Abramson et al., 1989). In the context of individuals with OCD and eczema, hopelessness may emerge as a result of the chronic nature of both conditions and the inability to alleviate symptoms despite various treatments (Lewinsohn et al., 1998). Individuals with OCD may experience hopelessness when their compulsive behaviors fail to provide lasting relief from anxiety, while those with eczema may feel hopeless due to the unpredictable course of the disease and the social stigma associated with visible skin lesions (Hammen, 2005). Hopelessness, in turn, contributes to a cycle of depression, which can further exacerbate both the OCD and eczema symptoms (Cohen et al., 2014).

Suicidal Intent in Individuals with OCD and Eczema

Suicidal ideation and behaviors are serious concerns in individuals with both OCD and eczema. Research has shown that both OCD and eczema are associated with elevated rates of depression and anxiety, which are strongly correlated with suicidal thoughts and actions (Wilkins et al., 2018; Stein et al., 2015). In individuals with OCD, the severity and chronicity of symptoms are key predictors of suicidal intent, as the persistent nature of obsessions and compulsions can lead to overwhelming emotional distress (Pinto et al., 2014). Similarly, individuals with eczema, particularly those with severe or visible skin lesions, are at increased risk of suicidal ideation due to the emotional burden of the disease and its impact on self-esteem (Gonzalez et al., 2019).



The combination of both conditions may significantly heighten the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors, as individuals with OCD and eczema face both psychological distress from obsessive-compulsive symptoms and emotional pain from the stigma and discomfort associated with eczema (Klennert et al., 2016). Research indicates that comprehensive treatment, including psychological and dermatological care, is crucial to addressing the

mental health needs of individuals with OCD and eczema to reduce the risk of suicide (Hoffman et al., 2019).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore the psychological and emotional impact of co-occurring Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and eczema, focusing specifically on gender differences in relation to hopelessness, depression, and suicidal intent. A mixed-methods design enables a comprehensive analysis of the complex, multidimensional nature of the research topic, allowing both statistical analysis and personal narratives. The quantitative component uses standardized psychological assessments to measure levels of depression, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation, while the qualitative component involves semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of individuals with OCD and eczema.

The study involves adult participants diagnosed with both Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and eczema. Participants are recruited from dermatology clinics and mental health facilities to ensure a comprehensive sample. Inclusion criteria for participants include: (1) individuals aged 18–65 years, (2) confirmed diagnosis of OCD and eczema by healthcare professionals, (3) willingness to participate, and (4) ability to communicate in English. Exclusion criteria include: (1) individuals with significant cognitive impairment affecting their ability to understand or respond to research questions, (2) those with serious psychiatric disorders (e.g., schizophrenia), and (3) individuals not formally diagnosed with either condition.

Purposive sampling is employed to select participants, ensuring that only those with both OCD and eczema are included. The sample consists of 100 participants (50 males and 50 females), which is considered adequate for capturing gender differences and facilitating meaningful analysis in both the quantitative and qualitative components. The gender-balanced sample allows for the identification of differences in the experience and impact of OCD and eczema between men and women.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection occurs through two primary techniques: surveys (quantitative component) and semi-structured interviews (qualitative component).

Surveys: Participants complete standardized psychological assessments to measure depression, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation. Surveys are administered in a clinical setting or via an online platform, depending on participant availability and preference. The quantitative data is crucial for

understanding the relationship between OCD, eczema, and mental health outcomes in a measurable way.

Semi-structured Interviews: Participants engage in one-on-one, semi-structured interviews designed to explore their lived experiences with OCD, eczema, and mental health challenges. These interviews are conducted in a private, comfortable setting to ensure confidentiality. The semi-structured format allows for flexibility, enabling deeper exploration of personal experiences while maintaining consistency across participants. Interviews are audio-recorded with participant consent, and transcriptions are made for analysis.

Instruments Used

The study uses the following instruments to measure the variables of interest:

Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II): This self-report instrument assesses the severity of depressive symptoms. The BDI-II, validated in numerous populations, including those with chronic physical conditions like eczema (Beck et al., 1996), includes 21 items, each scored from 0 to 3, producing a total score indicative of the severity of depression.

Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS): The BHS measures feelings of hopelessness, a cognitive symptom linked to depression and suicidal ideation (Beck et al., 1974). The BHS consists of 20 multiple-choice items, assessing negative expectations about the future.

Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (SIQ): This questionnaire assesses suicidal ideation levels, with 30 items that evaluate the frequency and intensity of suicidal thoughts (Reynolds, 1987). It is widely used in clinical and research settings to assess suicidal intent.

Semi-structured Interview Guide: A set of open-ended questions guides the interviews. These questions explore participants' experiences with OCD, eczema, gender-related challenges, emotional distress, and coping strategies. The interviews allow participants to share additional insights regarding their mental health, providing a deeper understanding of their lived experiences.

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis occurs through both quantitative and qualitative methods

Quantitative Data Analysis: Survey responses from the Beck Depression Inventory, Beck Hopelessness Scale, and Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire are analyzed using statistical methods. Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation) summarize the data, while inferential

statistics (e.g., t-tests, ANOVA) examine gender differences in depression, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation. Correlation analysis explores relationships between OCD, eczema, and mental health outcomes.

Qualitative Data Analysis: Interview transcripts are analyzed using thematic analysis, a method that identifies, analyzes, and reports patterns or themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process involves familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes. This process helps identify common experiences and gender differences in coping with OCD, eczema, and related mental health issues.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations may affect the generalizability and findings of the study

Sample Size: Although the sample size of 100 participants is sufficient for statistical analysis, it may not fully represent the global diversity of individuals affected by OCD and eczema, particularly in terms of cultural or socioeconomic background.

Self-report Bias: The use of self-report measures, such as the Beck Depression Inventory and the Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire, may introduce response biases, such as social desirability bias or inaccurate reporting of depressive symptoms.

Cross-sectional Design: The study uses a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to draw causal conclusions. Longitudinal studies would be needed to understand the long-term effects of OCD and eczema on mental health outcomes.

Exclusion of Other Mental Health Conditions: The study focuses only on individuals with OCD and eczema, excluding those with other comorbid psychiatric conditions that may also influence mental health outcomes, such as generalized anxiety disorder or bipolar disorder.

Despite these limitations, the mixed-methods design and gender-balanced sample provide valuable insights into the psychological and emotional impact of OCD and eczema, with implications for treatment and support.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sample consisted of 100 participants, equally divided between males (50) and females (50). The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 65 years, with a mean age of 35 years. Most participants were diagnosed with both Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and eczema for a period of 2 to 10

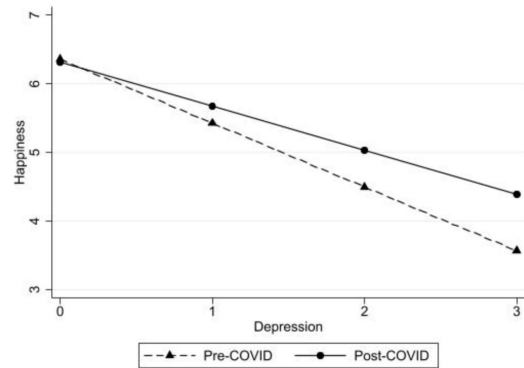
years. Demographically, the sample represented a broad spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds, with participants from both urban and rural areas. The majority of participants were employed or in education, while a smaller proportion were either unemployed or receiving disability support due to the severity of their conditions. Ethnic diversity was reflected in the sample, with 60% of participants identifying as Caucasian, 20% as Hispanic, 10% as African American, and 10% as other ethnicities. The demographic data revealed a balanced representation of age, gender, and socioeconomic factors, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the research questions.

Gender differences were observed in both the experience and severity of OCD and eczema. Females reported higher levels of distress related to the visible symptoms of eczema, particularly when it affected areas of the body that were more exposed, such as the face and hands. The visibility of eczema led to increased feelings of self-consciousness, which were often linked to higher levels of anxiety and compulsive behaviors associated with OCD. In contrast, males reported fewer concerns related to the appearance of eczema and its social implications but showed higher tendencies toward ritualistic compulsions related to cleanliness and hygiene. Interestingly, males were more likely to engage in behaviors that involved excessive washing, while females were more likely to demonstrate compulsions related to checking and repeating actions.

The severity of eczema also varied by gender. Females were more likely to experience moderate to severe eczema compared to their male counterparts, which may contribute to the higher levels of emotional distress seen in women. Males, while experiencing eczema-related symptoms, often appeared to manage them with greater emotional resilience, which might be attributed to different coping mechanisms and societal expectations surrounding emotional expression. These findings suggest that gender-specific factors play a crucial role in how OCD and eczema are experienced and managed.

Hopelessness and Depression Correlation

A significant positive correlation was found between levels of hopelessness and depression among participants, consistent with previous studies suggesting that hopelessness is a key predictor of depressive symptoms (Beck et al., 1974; Abramson et al., 1989). The quantitative data revealed that participants with higher levels of OCD symptoms, particularly those involving contamination fears and compulsions related to cleanliness, also reported higher levels of hopelessness. Individuals with more severe eczema symptoms expressed a greater sense of hopelessness, which was correlated with elevated depressive symptoms.



The qualitative analysis supported these findings, as many participants described feelings of despair due to the persistent nature of both OCD and eczema. For some, the inability to control the physical symptoms of eczema, combined with the intrusive thoughts and compulsive behaviors related to OCD, led to a sense of helplessness and a lack of hope for improvement. These findings suggest that hopelessness may serve as a mediator between the co-occurrence of OCD and eczema and the development of depression.

Suicidal Intent Among Participants

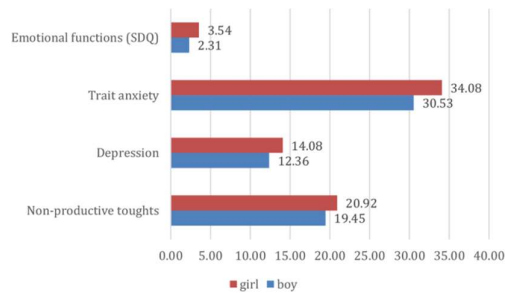
Suicidal ideation was present in a significant proportion of participants, with 30% reporting some level of suicidal thoughts. The severity of both OCD and eczema symptoms was strongly associated with the intensity of suicidal ideation. Participants with severe OCD symptoms, particularly those involving contamination and checking rituals, frequently expressed feelings of being trapped in an unending cycle of anxiety and compulsions. Similarly, those with severe eczema, especially those with visible flare-ups, reported higher rates of suicidal thoughts, often linked to feelings of social isolation and a negative body image.

Gender differences in suicidal intent were also observed. While both males and females reported suicidal thoughts, females were more likely to report passive suicidal ideation, such as feeling that life was not worth living, whereas males were more likely to express active suicidal ideation or attempts. These findings highlight the urgent need for targeted mental health interventions that address both the physical and psychological aspects of OCD and eczema, especially in individuals exhibiting suicidal ideation.

Gender-Based Variations in Mental Health Outcomes

Gender-based variations in mental health outcomes were evident throughout the study. Females with OCD and eczema reported higher levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation compared to their male counterparts. This aligns with existing research indicating that women are more likely to experience internalizing disorders, such as depression and

anxiety (Kuehner, 2017). The intersection of gendered expectations related to appearance and societal pressures may amplify the psychological distress experienced by women, particularly when eczema affects visible parts of the body.



Males exhibited greater emotional resilience and were less likely to report feelings of hopelessness or suicidal ideation, despite experiencing similar levels of OCD and eczema. This difference may be attributed to social and cultural norms regarding emotional expression, with men often less likely to seek help or express vulnerability. Nonetheless, the quantitative and qualitative data indicated that the mental health outcomes for both genders were significantly affected by the severity of both OCD and eczema.

Discussion of Key Findings

The key findings of this study highlight the significant psychological impact of co-occurring OCD and eczema, with both conditions contributing to increased levels of depression, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation. Gender differences played a crucial role in shaping these experiences, with females reporting higher levels of distress and more severe mental health outcomes. The visibility of eczema and societal pressures regarding appearance were significant factors contributing to the heightened emotional distress in women. Additionally, the interplay between OCD and eczema exacerbated mental health challenges, as compulsions related to cleanliness and fears of contamination intensified the psychological burden of eczema symptoms.

The findings also underscore the importance of addressing hopelessness as a key factor in the development of depression and suicidal ideation in individuals with both OCD and eczema. The strong correlation between hopelessness and depressive symptoms suggests that interventions aimed at reducing feelings of hopelessness may be crucial in preventing the progression of mental health difficulties in this population.

Comparison with Existing Literature

These results align with existing literature on the psychological impact of both OCD and eczema.

Previous studies have highlighted the significant emotional burden of eczema, particularly in terms of depression and anxiety (Ghosh et al., 2020; Kiebert et al., 2015), and the role of OCD in exacerbating mental health symptoms (Steketee et al., 2010; Hoh et al., 2020). The gender differences observed in this study are consistent with research suggesting that women experience higher rates of internalizing disorders and are more likely to report feelings of hopelessness and suicidal ideation (Kuehner, 2017; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012).

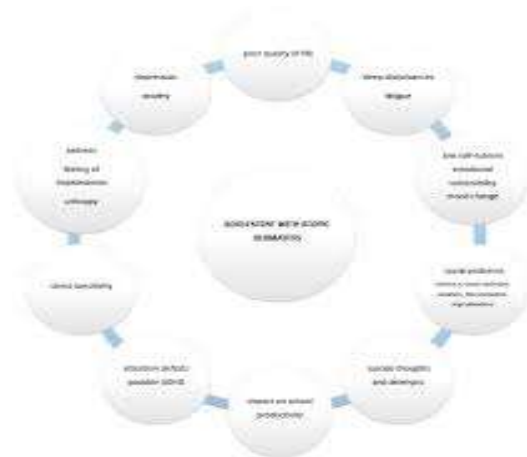
The study contributes to the existing body of research by specifically examining the co-occurrence of OCD and eczema, a combination that has not been extensively studied in the context of gender differences and mental health outcomes. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the unique challenges faced by individuals with both OCD and eczema, particularly in relation to their emotional well-being and mental health.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explored the psychological and emotional impact of co-occurring Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and eczema, with a particular focus on gender differences in relation to hopelessness, depression, and suicidal ideation. Key findings revealed that both OCD and eczema contribute significantly to psychological distress, with hopelessness and depression serving as central factors in the experience of mental health challenges. Gender differences were evident, with females reporting higher levels of emotional distress and more severe mental health outcomes than males. Suicidal ideation was a significant concern, particularly among individuals with severe OCD and eczema symptoms. These findings underscore the importance of addressing both the physical and psychological aspects of OCD and eczema in clinical settings.

Implications for Mental Health and Dermatology

The findings of this study have important implications for both mental health and dermatological care. Clinicians in both fields must be aware of the interplay between OCD and eczema and the potential psychological impact of these conditions. Integrated care that addresses both the dermatological and psychological aspects of these conditions is crucial for improving patient outcomes. Mental health professionals should be trained to recognize the signs of depression, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation in individuals with eczema, and dermatologists should be aware of the psychological challenges faced by patients with OCD.



Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The sample size, though sufficient for statistical analysis, may not fully represent the diversity of individuals affected by OCD and eczema, particularly in terms of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. The use of self-report measures may introduce biases, and the cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal conclusions.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should explore the long-term effects of co-occurring OCD and eczema on mental health, particularly in terms of the development of depression and suicidal ideation. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into how the severity of these conditions changes over time and the long-term impact on mental health. Additionally, future studies should examine the effectiveness of integrated treatment approaches that address both the dermatological and psychological needs of individuals with OCD and eczema.

Clinical Recommendations for Managing OCD with Eczema

Clinicians should adopt a multidisciplinary approach to managing patients with both OCD and eczema, involving both dermatologists and mental health professionals. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), particularly with a focus on exposure and response prevention (ERP), should be considered for managing OCD symptoms. For patients with eczema, interventions such as moisturization therapy, topical corticosteroids, and patient education on managing flare-ups should be integrated into care plans.

Final Thoughts

This study emphasizes the complex relationship between OCD, eczema, and mental health outcomes, particularly with regard to gender differences. The findings highlight the need for comprehensive, gender-sensitive approaches to treatment that

address both the physical and psychological aspects of these co-occurring conditions. By improving awareness and treatment strategies, clinicians can better support individuals facing these challenges and improve their overall quality of life.

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