

ABSTRACT

Prevalence of childhood skin disease has not been extensively studied in South Africa, despite these conditions representing a significant social and economic burden. This retrospective, hospital-based study at the paediatric dermatology clinic at Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital in Johannesburg aimed at documenting the prevalence and spectrum of childhood skin diseases in this community. 1771 diagnostic entries showed dermatitis, skin infection, and pigment disorder categories to be most common. Atopic dermatitis was significantly prevalent (79.8%) compared to other disorders. Infections were mostly viral, predominantly represented by molluscum contagiosum, followed by dermatophytosis. This prevalence pattern resembled first-world findings, but differed to African studies whereby bacterial, parasitic and fungal infections predominated, with increasing atopic dermatitis prevalence. These findings demonstrated variation in the distribution of skin diseases between differing socio-economic environments, prompting specific interventions. High atopic dermatitis prevalence in the study population encourages further research for molecular and environmental risk factor identification, as well as optimization of management.