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SKIN PICKING IN TURKISH STUDENTS

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Skin picking (SP) behavior is characterized by repetitive episodes of scratching or picking skin causing significant tissue damage, functional deterioration and severe distress.

The aim of this study was to investigate the SP frequency in and SP characteristics of the Turkish student population.

Methods: All participants, 270 students, were selected from different universities in Turkey between March 2010 and January 2010. Twenty-five students (9.2%) were excluded because of missing information. One hundred forty-five (59.2%) of the participants were female, 100 (40.8%) were male and mean age was 22.02 ± 2.1 .

All participants were assessed by Skin Picking Inventory, Skin Picking Impact Scale and Skin Picking Scale which were translated to Turkish by the authors.

Descriptive statistical methods were utilized for SP frequency and characteristics. Chi square analysis was utilized for distributional analyses.

Results: Two hundred fifteen students (87.8% of total participants) endorsed engaging in SP. One hundred seven participants (43.6%) reported recurrent SP episodes defined as one or more daily SP episodes, with an estimated daily SP time of more than 5 minutes. Thirty (12.2%) students engaged in SP despite lack of any dermatological problems and felt significantly distressed, functionally impaired and had tissue damage. There was no significant difference between females and males regarding the frequency of SP (Women $n=16$, 11.0%; Men $n=14$, 14.0%; $\chi^2=0.484$, $p>0.05$).

Conclusion: Our study showed that SP is a common behavior in Turkish student population. The literature on SP behavior in student populations is limited and there is need for further research on this topic.