

INTRODUCTION

Urticaria is not a single entity with only one cause or treatment. Rather, it comprises a group of conditions with weals or angioedema (Jere D. Guin, 1982).

Urticaria may be classified into acute and chronic. It may be also classified into allergic and non-allergic (Champion, 1979).

Urticaria and angioedema share similar pathologic mechanisms, may appear together or separately, and are clinically distinguishable. When acute urticaria is a self-limited disorder, disappearing within 6 weeks as mysteriously as it appeared, it is one of the simplest medical problems confronting the clinician. However, chronic urticaria, characterized by episodes lasting longer than 6 weeks, may persist for years. Despite exhaustive studies on the causes of chronic urticaria, in approximately 80% of chronic urticaria patients, a specific cause is never identified (Berman et al., 1982).

The aim of this work is to write an essay about urticaria which may be of help in understanding its aetiology and in finding out the most effective

treatment of each of its types.

The essay will include the following items:

1. Historical background.
2. Definition and classification.
3. Aetiology.
4. Pathogenesis.
5. Histopathology.
6. Clinical picture and varieties.
7. Diagnosis.
8. Treatment.