

S U M M A R Y

This thesis comprises a study on thirty Egyptian patients presenting with chronic urticaria, and a review of the previous literature on the disease.

After a careful history-taking, the patients were subjected to a complete physical examination, including gynaecological, dental, E.N.T. examinations. Stool, blood and urine analyses were made for all of them, as well as intradermal skin tests and radiological examination of the chest. A trial of elimination of the possible allergio diet, and empirical therapeutic treatment were conducted in all of them.

We found out that female patients, mostly housewives in the third and fourth decades of life were most susceptible to the disease, presenting with itching and transient oedema of the skin. Hot weather, exercise and trauma to the skin were exaggerating factors in some cases, while in others urticaria occurred after penicillin or aspirin therapy or intake. However, most of the cases could not relate the onset to any known cause. The duration of the disease varied from six weeks to six years.

Diseases of the upper respiratory tract together with dental caries were found in a high percentage of the examined group.

As regards laboratory investigations, *entamoeba histolytica* was a common finding.

Skin test showed sensitivity to more than one allergen.

26 cases showed positive intradermal test to *candida albicans*,
27 cases showed positive intradermal test to mites,
26 cases showed positive intradermal test to house dust,
24 cases showed positive intradermal test to milk,
24 cases showed positive intradermal test to egg,
15 cases showed positive intradermal test to *Aspergillus*,
15 cases showed positive intradermal test to *Gladiosporum*,
11 cases showed positive intradermal test to grass pollens.

The commonest associations were between house dust, mites, *candida*, egg, and milk, and highest was sensitivity to *candida albicans*.

Elimination of the supposed food allergen did not show any improvement in most cases, as well as empirical antihistaminic treatment and eradication of septic foci.

The aetiology of chronic urticaria is obscure. It may be caused by many factors including foods, drugs, infections and emotional stress. The pathogenesis, as well, is a matter of great debate, immunologic and non-immunologic factors having been mentioned. Various lines of treatment have been advocated, some with success and others purely symptomatic.