51.5b. The burden of mycotic keratitis in West Africa

Harish Gugnani\(^1\)

\(^{1}\) eyebank Patel Eye Institute, University of Delhi, Delhi-11007, India

1 University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

51.5c. Mycotic Keratitis, Saturday, 21, 11:00 AM - 12:10 PM

Background: Fungal infection of the cornea, known as mycotic keratitis, can cause permanent corneal scarring and perforation resulting in the loss of the eye. This paper reviews the prevalence and epidemiology of mycotic keratitis in different countries of West Africa to estimate its burden.

Methods: An exhaustive search of the literature was made on Google, PubMed, MEDLINE, Cochrane Library, and Web of Knowledge using different sets of keywords, viz., mycotic keratitis, ocular fungal infection, West Africa, risk factors, prevalence, and geographical distribution.

Results: A study in Nigeria over a period of 4 years (1974-1977) dealt with 42 confirmed cases of mycotic keratitis with Paecilomyces simplex as the predominant etiological agent (12 cases) followed by Penicillium cystoides (8 cases) and Aspergillus flavus (7 cases). Most of the patients were in the 1st to 3rd decades of life. The leading symptoms were pain, photophobia, redness, and discolored vision. The disease was commonly associated with trauma such as scratches, insect bites, and after surgery. The visual outcome of the patients was poor, with a 100% risk of corneal perforation and a 67% risk of blindness.

Conclusion: The burden of mycotic keratitis in West Africa is substantial, and there is an urgent need for targeted interventions to prevent and treat this condition.