

Diagnostic Agreement Between Primary Care Physician and Dermatologist and Reason for Referral to Skin Clinic

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Objectives: To assess the extent of diagnostic agreement between primary care physician and dermatologist among referred patients and to identify the reasons of referral.

Design: Prospective study.

Method: Two hundred and thirty-seven newly referred patients by primary care physicians to dermatology outpatient clinic during May 99 to August 99 were studied using the referral letters. Twenty-five cases were excluded because of incomplete data.

Results: The overall agreement of primary care physician with the dermatologist diagnosis was 67.5 percent.

Acne vulgaris and molluscum contagiosum were hundred percent, and nail infection was eighty-six percent while skin tumors were thirty-one point five percent. Fifty-two point seven percent of patients referred required hospital-based management while thirty-two percent were referred to establish the correct diagnoses by the dermatologist.

Conclusion: The diagnostic accuracy between primary care physician and dermatologist in this study was 67.5 percent. Over fifty-two percent needed hospital-based management.

Many cases referred for management purpose had the potential for management at general practice by improving primary care physicians training and providing appropriate facilities at the level of primary care.