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Research in the Grisons

More knowledge about neurodermatitis

Study examines correlations with other diseases

Once a month, Academia Raetica presents research projects that are of social importance for Graubünden and the Alpine region. They give a preview of the conference "Graubünden forscht" on September 21 and 22, 2022, to which the public is also invited (www.gr-forscht.ch).



*The skin is our largest organ and its health is very important.
Image: iStock.com/Cunaplus_M.Faba*

Neurodermatitis is one of the most common chronic inflammatory skin diseases worldwide. It manifests itself in the form of itching skin lesions and can have a severe impact on the quality of life. The itchy skin lesions often deprive those affected of sleep and frequently also put a strain on the psyche. The Christine Kühne - Center for Allergy Research and Education (CK-CARE), based in Davos with other study centers in Zurich, Augsburg, Bonn and St. Gallen, therefore launched the "ProRaD" study in 2016. One of the aims of the

study is to better understand the mechanisms that influence the course of atopic dermatitis and its relationships with other diseases. The research results are expected to contribute to the development of new approaches for the prevention and treatment of the skin disease and accompanying illnesses.

To date, more than 1,000 people with atopic dermatitis are participating in the comprehensive study in Zurich, Davos, Bonn and Augsburg. Danielle Céline Fehr has been working as a study doctor for the "ProRaD" study in Zurich since 2020, as well as in the research team of Professor Marie-Charlotte Brügggen based in Davos, and explains the process: "We observe the course of the disease of the individual study participants over a period of five years in each case. Once a year, we meet them for a personal interview, listen to their heart and lungs, and take various samples. I find it very rewarding to be able to spend time with patients within the study and answer their questions." The patient data collected can be filtered according to certain criteria to answer various questions with regard to neurodermatitis.

Fehr is particularly interested in whether there is a connection between atopic dermatitis and also wide-spread cardiovascular diseases, such as high blood pressure: "Large-scale studies from the USA and Europe have so far come to contradictory results. I analyzed ProRaD data from 705 adult patients with atopic dermatitis and a control group consisting of 80 individuals without atopic dermatitis. My comparison of the two groups with each other shows that, in general, people with atopic dermatitis do not have significantly more cardiovascular disease

than people without atopic dermatitis. So, the good news is that neurodermatitis patients probably do not need any special measures or examinations regarding cardiovascular disease. However, 'pure' atopic dermatitis patients seem to have cardiovascular disease more often than those who have concomitant allergies, asthma, or hay fever. This could have immunological causes."

Fehr finds clinical research very exciting and varied: "I like the structured and precise work combined with logical thinking and especially the contact with patients."

Daniela Heinen

CK-CARE's research teams work together with international cooperation partners to address deficits in the diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of allergy patients, thus making an important contribution to the lasting well-being of patients. www.ck-care.ch

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Danielle Fehr. Photo provided.