Eczema in young children leads to 3 in 4 depressed parents, research shows

(MADRID, 10 October, 2019) Family members and caregivers of children with Atopic Dermatitis, the most common form of eczema, have been found to suffer mild severity anxiety and depression, new research presented today at the 28th EADV Congress has found¹.

Researchers from the PHI University Clinic of Dermatology assessed the impact of an atopic dermatitis diagnosis on the families of 35 children aged 1-6. In total, the researchers evaluated 83 family members and caregivers and found that all respondents reported at least mild severity anxiety* with some showing moderate severity anxiety. Almost three in four (74%) participants were also found to present with depression.

The study found that depression and anxiety scores were associated with the persistence and longevity of atopic dermatitis. Researchers did not find an association between scores and the severity of the disease, meaning that depression or anxiety was not observed to increase where atopic dermatitis was more severe.

Atopic dermatitis, the most common form of eczema, affects between 10-20% of the paediatric population of Europe² and causes the skin to become itchy, red dry and cracked³. It is a chronic condition that most often occurs in people who have allergies and can develop alongside asthma and hayfever⁴. As well as the symptoms of AD, patients with the condition are also known to suffer insomnia, anxiety and psychosocial stress, linked to the physical manifestation of their eczema.

The study utilised the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HDRS) and Hamilton Anxiety Rating scale (HAM-A), one of the first and most widely used ratings systems for identifying the two conditions in both a clinical and research setting. To supplement the ratings questionnaires, the team also asked participants what their greatest concerns were. The most frequent worry reported was the information families and caregivers receive about the nature of the disease itself, since AD is a long-term condition which requires complex and costly medical treatments.

Commenting on the research, lead researcher Dr Vesna Grivcheva-Panovska said, “The chronicity and complexity of chronic dermatitis often leads to overlooked anxiety and depression in family members and caregivers, but our results show the extent of this cannot be overstated. In the future, we must take a wholesome view of the situation and a widened approach to the management of Atopic Dermatitis not only of the patients but of their families as well.”

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The average HAM-A score was 12.9 with the lowest being 6.7 and the highest 20. Each item is scored on a scale of 0 (not present) to 4 (severe), with a total score range of 0–56, where <17 indicates mild severity, 18–24 mild to moderate severity and 25–30 moderate to severe.

**Notes to Editors**

A reference to the 28th EADV Congress must be included when communicating any information within this press release.

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**About Dr Vesna Grivcheva-Panovska:**

Prof Dr Vesna Grivcheva-Panovska is head of the Allergy and Clinical Immunology Unit and head of Diagnostics at the University Clinic of Dermatology, School of Medicine, University St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia. Her main field of interest are chronic, hard to treat allergic diseases.

**About EADV:**

Founded in 1987, EADV is a non-profit organisation whose vision is to be the premier European Dermato-Venereology Society. The Academy counts over 7,000 members from 100 countries, providing a valuable service for every type of dermato-venereologist professional. EADV are dedicated to advancing patient care, education and research by providing a unique platform to bring people together and share ideas.

The EADV Congress takes place every year and attracts over 13,000 attendees. Boasting an exceptional Scientific Programme and educational experience with more than 180 sessions across various tracks, expert speakers will discuss the latest advances and information on trending topics in dermatology.

Find out more via the EADV website: [https://www.eadv.org/](https://www.eadv.org/)
References:

1. Anxiety and depression in family members and caregivers of pre-school children with atopic dermatitis (Grivcheva-Panovska, V). Presented at the 28th EADV Congress, Madrid, 9 October, 2019
3. NHS. 2019. Atopic eczema. Available at: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/atopic-eczema/