

May 2021: Heterogeneity in reported skin manifestations of COVID-19 and vaccines



Jonathan Kantor, MD, MSCE

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Saint Augustine, Florida

In their important study on skin findings associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection, Tan et al¹ performed a review of all published articles regarding skin manifestations associated with COVID-19 and evaluated them through a global lens. By casting a broad net and including the full array of published articles from around the world, the authors were able to explore the ways in which the reporting of COVID-19 skin findings varies geographically. Notably, they pointed out the discordance between morphological reports among countries. Some of these were unsurprising—pernio, a condition in which immunoglobulin A immunoreactivity may be modulated by temperature, was reported only rarely in Asia—however, many others remain to be better understood. Most importantly, it is not clear whether differences in the reported skin manifestations truly reflect differences in skin manifestations or whether we are simply seeing artifacts associated with differential reporting practices.

It is critical to appreciate that essentially all reports on skin findings associated with COVID-19 are biased; even the best and largest registry studies, such as those sponsored by the American Academy

of Dermatology and the International League of Dermatological Societies,^{2,3} are subject to the vagaries of the whims of those choosing to report their data. As we continue to explore the skin manifestations due to vaccination, many questions persist. Despite the murkiness of the data, one thing remains clear—we need dermatologists to continue to engage in prosocial actions, such as registry reporting, to ensure that we have the highest quality data available for hypothesis generation and further research.

Conflicts of interest

None disclosed.

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From the Department of Dermatology, Center for Global Health, and Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, Philadelphia; and Florida Center for Dermatology, PA, Saint Augustine.

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Correspondence to: Jonathan Kantor, MD, MSCE, Department of Dermatology, Center for Global Health, and Center for Clinical

Epidemiology and Biostatistics, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School Medicine, Philadelphia, PA and Florida Center for Dermatology, PA, Saint Augustine, FL. E-mail: jonkantor@gmail.com.

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