Prevalence of clinical varicocele in Iran

To the Editor
Prevalence of clinical varicocele in adolescent and young population has been reported from 15 to 22.9% in different sources. There are few if any population-based studies from Iran addressing the issue. The usefulness of such estimates are three-fold: they elucidate the role of ethnicity in the disease prevalence, make global projection through estimate pooling possible, and are instrumental in priority setting and selection of screening programs.

In a military screening program of 1348 recruits aged 18-30 (mean: 23.7) years, prevalence of clinical varicocele was estimated at 15.6% (95% CI: ± 1.9%) which seems comparable to those of similar reports. One physician examined all of the participants in the upright position and made a diagnosis of varicocele when any of the following were observed: typical appearance on inspection, typical bag of worms sensation on palpation, and cough or Valsalva’s induced impulse while palpating the spermatic cord. Population of military recruits is a common framework for prevalence studies and several of the reports of varicocele prevalence were from such populations who are very much representative of the healthy young subjects.

Varicocele has been implicated in the pathogenesis of testicular atrophy and about 15 to 20% of adults with varicocele are infertile. The relatively high prevalence of varicocele supports the need for routine health visit or screening programs for adolescents or young adults.

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References

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