

A 2023 snapshot of sensitive scalp prevalence worldwide: Data from the All Skins-All Colors-All Dermatoses: the ALL PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVE

In 2008, a publication highlighted that a sensitive scalp was a reality (Misery L, Sensitive scalp: does this condition exist? An epidemiological study. Contact Dermatitis. 2008). In this publication, based on a representative French population, 44.2% of French people said they suffered from a sensitive scalp (47.4% for women versus 40.8% for men). We wanted to investigate this, especially as few evaluations have been carried out on this subject.

MATERIAL & METHODS

The ALL PROJECT involves 50,552 individuals, representative of the adult populations of 20 countries spread over all five continents. In each of the 20 countries surveyed, we conducted a population-based study on representative and extrapolable samples of the general population aged 16 years or more. No study has simultaneously evaluated the prevalence of sensitive scalps worldwide. The ALL PROJECT aims to provide a snapshot of the prevalence of sensitive scalps.

To be consistent, the questions were formulated in the same way as in the 2008 study.

RESULTS

The 2023 snapshot reported prevalence of sensitive scalp (when we take into account the weight of each country), in the population aged 16 and over was 47.2% (48.8% for women versus 44.6% for men, P-value <0.0001). Although there are differences in prevalence between the different countries, it should be noted that in no country is the prevalence lower than 33%, nor is it higher than 66% in any country. It can be seen that the perceived prevalence of a sensitive scalp is higher when patients are younger: 50.9% for 16–44-year-olds, 44.3% for 45–64-year-olds and 39.7% for those aged 65 and over [.p<0.0001]

The prevalence of a sensitive scalp is also higher among those who declared sensitive skin: 77.3%, 61.9%, 29.3% and 4.4% respectively for very sensitive, sensitive, slightly sensitive and not sensitive skin. Prevalence in the major regions of the world is shown in Figure 2.

DISCUSSION

As described in the 2018 publication, sensitive scalp is a common occurrence in all countries. The frequent but not constant association between sensitive skin and sensitive scalp suggests that sensitive scalp belongs to the sensitive skin syndrome, but with a number of specific features, probably linked to some specific triggering factors^{2,3} and the particular organisation of the innervation of the scalp.

