Earlier treatment improves the chances of complete relief from postherpetic neuralgia.

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Introduction

- ◆ **Postherpetic neuralgia (PHN)** is usually defined as pain persisting for more than 120 days after the onset of herpes zoster rash.
- ◆ Among PHN patients who commonly visit a pain physician rather than a dermatologist, complete relief from pain in response to active treatment can sometimes be observed in the clinical field.
- ◆ This study evaluated **the incidence of complete relief from PHN** and **the factors** influencing it.

Results

Methods

- ◆ A retrospective chart review was performed on patients with PHN at a university-based pain clinic over 7 years.
- ◆ The **responders** were defined as patients who had **complete relief from pain after 1 year of active treatment**.
- ◆ Age, sex, duration of PHN at their first visit, and dermatomal distribution were compared in the responder and non-responder groups.
- ◆ Responders were also compared according to these factors.

	Number of Responders = 35 (29.9 %)							Number of Non-Responders = 82 (70.1 %)						
Age (y)	< 50	50 - 59	60 - 69	≥ 70				< 50	50-59	60-69	≥ 70			
Number (N)	2	10	9	14				7	14	24	37			
Sex	M			F				M			F			
N	11			24				37			45			
Duration of PHN at their first visit	< 6 (month)	6 - 9	9 - 12	12 - 15	15 - 18	18 - 24	24 ≥	< 6	6 - 9	9 - 12	12 - 15	15 - 18	18 - 24	24 ≥
N	20	5	3	2	2	1	2	38	12	4	6	2	9	11
Diabetes	-			+				-			+			
N	33			2				80			2			
Cancer with immunosuppression	-			+				-			+			
N	34			1				80			2			
Dermatomal distribution	CN V (V)		Cervical (C)		Thoracic (T)		Lumbosacral (L)	V		C		T		L
N	9		4		18		4	17		13		43		9

Table 1. Comparison of age, sex, duration of PHN, underlying disease, and dermatomal distribution

Fig 1. Complete pain relief rate (%) according to affecting factors

Conclusions

- ◆ **Almost 30% of PHN patients received complete pain relief.**
- ◆ Those who sought **treatment earlier, within 9 months**, in a pain clinic, received a **better result**.