Prevalence of antithrombin deficiency in patients with chronic leg ulcer.

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Antithrombin is one of the main endogenous anticoagulants and its deficiency is associated with deep venous thrombosis. The aim of the present study was to evaluate the prevalence of antithrombin deficiency in patients with chronic lower extremity ulcers. Forty-eight patients with chronic lower limb ulcers for longer than 10 years, evaluated during 1997, were studied: 40 were female (83.3%) and eight were male (16.6%), with ages ranging from 43 to 73 years (mean, 55.2 years). Antithrombin was dosed by the coagulometric method, with evaluation of the functional activity. Measurement was repeated in those cases where deficiency was found to be present. The highest prevalence rate for antithrombin deficiency in the general population was one in every 2000 cases. Data analysis was performed by utilizing the odds ratio with a confidence interval of 95% and P < 0.05. Deficiency in antithrombin levels was recorded in two (4.1%) of the patients with chronic ulcer. These results indicate a higher prevalence rate of antithrombin deficiency in those patients with chronic leg ulcers, suggesting that an association may be present. Further studies with a larger number of patients are required to confirm this hypothesis.

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