

## Hong Kong woman who killed parents, self was bothered by her eczema and steroid side effects

Korin Miller

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Writer

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A woman in Hong Kong killed her parents and herself on Father's Day, and her skin condition may have been behind the attacks, authorities suggest.

According to a police report obtained by CNN, former nursing student Pang Ching-yu, 23, stabbed her parents with a knife and then apparently killed herself. Police say they found a suicide note in Pang's bedroom that said she was bothered by her eczema, an itchy skin inflammation.

Pang also wrote in an online forum that she blamed her parents for her skin condition. "People with eczema giving birth to kids are worse than poor people giving birth to kids," she reportedly wrote. "If you're poor, you can rely on your own hard work. With eczema, sorry, you have to suffer (your whole life) with no change."

Pang had also written online that she had side effects from steroids she used to treat her eczema. She added that having eczema means "there's nothing you can do except to wait and die," adding that her "social life (was) all gone."

Eczema is a long-lasting skin condition that is common in children but can happen at any age, according to the Mayo Clinic. People with eczema are often subject to flare-ups that cause dry, itchy skin, reddish-brown patches, small raised bumps that can leak fluid, thick, cracked, and scaly skin, and raw, sensitive skin from scratching, the organization says.



About 30 percent of people in the U.S. have eczema, and most are children or teens, the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases says. There is a hereditary link with eczema: The major risk factor, the Mayo Clinic noted, is having a personal or family history of eczema, allergies, hay fever, or asthma.

For the record, it's actually not necessarily true that eczema is worse in children of people who also suffer from the condition, **Gary Goldenberg, MD**, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City, tells Yahoo Lifestyle. However, if the parents also have allergies and/or asthma, it could increase the odds that their child will have a worse case of the condition, he says — but again, it's not a guarantee.

There is a definite link between eczema and mental health issues. A survey conducted by the National Eczema Association found that more than 30 percent of people with eczema were also diagnosed with depression and/or anxiety. The link between the two is still being explored, but the National Eczema Association says that it may be that people with inflammatory skin diseases like eczema are more susceptible to mental health issues because of the way their bodies communicate with their brains during an inflammatory response.

“In mental health, we see this body-mind correlation quite frequently,” John Mayer, PhD, a clinical psychologist who works with suicidal teens and author of *Family Fit: Find Your Balance in Life*, tells Yahoo Lifestyle. “Many of my patients come into therapy because they are struggling with physical ailments.” Some medications used to treat eczema, like corticosteroids, can also have depression as a side effect, Mayer points out.

If your child is struggling with a serious skin condition, Mayer says it's important to not deny it and don't encourage your child to deny it either. “Instead, do everything you can medically to treat [the skin condition], then to compensate for [it], teach them to accentuate other aspects of their being to make them feel good,” he says. “People who have physical conditions that lead them to thinking about suicide are fueled by hopelessness, so guide your child into all those vast number of characteristics they have that prove that they are not hopeless but are vibrant, attractive, dynamic, and desirable people.”