



INFECTIOUS DISEASES (BACTERIAL, FUNGAL, VIRAL, PARASITIC, INFESTATIONS)

EFFICACY OF TOPICAL IVERMECTIN VS. TEA TREE OIL FOR THE TREATMENT OF SCABIES

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Background: Human scabies is an intensely pruritic skin infestation caused by the host-specific mite *Sarcoptes scabiei hominis*. It is commonly treated with the insecticides but the treatment of choice is still controversial. The aim of this study was to compare the efficacy of topical ivermectin vs. tea tree oil (TTO) the treatment of scabies.

Materials and methods: In this clinical trial study, 320 patients with scabies were enrolled, and randomized into two groups: the first group received 1% ivermectin applied topically to the affected skin. The dose employed was 400 microg/kg, repeated once the following week, and the second group received two applications of 1% TTO a week apart. Treatment was evaluated at intervals of 2 and 4 weeks, and if there was treatment failure at the 2-week follow-up, treatment was repeated.

Results: Two application of topical ivermectin provided a cure rate of 71.8% at the 2-week follow-up, which increased to 82.5% at the 4-week follow-up after repeating the treatment. Two application of tea tree oil was effective in 65.6% of patients at the 2-week follow-up, which increased to 72.4% at the 4-week follow-up after this treatment was repeated.

Conclusion: Two application of topical ivermectin was as effective as two applications of tea tree oil at the 2-week follow-up. After repeating the treatment, topical ivermectin was superior to tea tree oil at the 4-week follow up.

