



MEDICAL THERAPIES AND PHARMACOLOGY

TOPICAL TREATMENTS FOR SEBORRHEIC KERATOSIS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

M Gonzalez⁽¹⁾ - V Ramos⁽¹⁾ - C Tan⁽¹⁾

University Of The Philippines - Philippine General Hospital, Dermatology, Manila, Philippines⁽¹⁾

Introduction: Seborrheic keratosis is a benign epidermal tumor commonly seen in the sun-exposed skin of adults. Current treatment modalities are invasive, which include electrodesiccation, cryotherapy, or surgery. Alternative options such as topical therapy may be beneficial to patients who have contraindications to standard treatment, or to those who prefer a non-invasive approach. However, evidence supporting the use of topical agents is lacking.

Objective: To determine the effectiveness and safety of topical medications on seborrheic keratosis in the clearance of lesions, compared to placebo or standard therapy.

Materials and Methods: Human studies involving adults with seborrheic keratosis treated with any topical medication and compared to cryotherapy, electrodesiccation or placebo were obtained from MEDLINE, HERDIN, and Cochrane electronic databases. Articles published from 1990 to June 2018 were included in this review.

Results: The search strategy yielded sixty articles. Nine publications (2 randomized controlled trials, 2 non-randomized controlled trials, 3 cohort studies, 2 case reports) covering twelve topical medications (hydrogen peroxide, tacalcitol, calcipotriol, maxacalcitol, ammonium lactate, tazarotene, imiquimod, trichloroacetic acid, urea, nitric-zinc oxide, potassium dobesilate, 5-fluorouracil) were identified. Among these, qualitative analysis showed that 40% hydrogen peroxide presented the highest level of evidence and was shown to be significantly more effective in lesion clearance compared to placebo.

Conclusions: Most of the topical medications reviewed were more effective compared to placebo, with a few well-tolerated minor adverse events. Hence, topical treatment may be considered as a viable option; however, the level of current evidence is low. Review of literature revealed only two randomized controlled trials. Other studies compared topical treatment with placebo, while the rest had no comparison group. Standard invasive therapy remains to be the more acceptable treatment modality. Further studies are needed to determine efficacy and safety of these topical agents.

