



PHOTOTHERAPY, PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY

A PATIENT SURVEY OF PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY: EXPERIENCE FROM TWO REGIONAL SERVICES

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Background: Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) is an established treatment for early skin cancers. Historically, associated pain has been reported to potentially limit treatment delivery. Our impression was that current PDT regimens has improved tolerance and we wished to evaluate this.

Objective: The objectives of this survey were i) to compare patients' view on the effectiveness and tolerability of PDT compared with alternative treatments, and ii) to collect data on the self-reported pain levels experienced by patients undergoing PDT.

Materials and Methods: Patients at two centres in Dundee and London were asked to complete a questionnaire after their first or second treatment of PDT as undertaken in a dermatology clinic setting. The questionnaire was devised by the authors and was based on published literature and their own experience of PDT practices in their respective dermatology departments..

Results: Of 156 completed questionnaires, 47 patients (30%) reported that they experienced "no pain", and a further 85 patients (55%) reported "mild, annoying" pain; the remaining 24 patients (15%) reported pain that was more intense. 115 patients (74%) had received other types of treatment prior to PDT. Of the 30 who had received topical 5-FU, 25 (83%) described PDT as the better treatment. Of the 15 who had previously been treated with imiquimod, 12 (80%) preferred PDT. Of the four who had previously been treated with ingenol mebutate, two preferred PDT. Of the 26 patients who had received cryotherapy, 15 patients (58%) preferred PDT. Of the 70 who had surgery before, 40 (64%) preferred PDT. Reasons given for preferring one treatment over another included convenience, effectiveness and level of discomfort.

Conclusions: This study shows that the majority of patients treated with PDT find treatment to be well tolerated, being painless or mildly painful and indeed that PDT is preferred by most patients compared with other therapies.

