PIGMENTATION

APREMILAST:A NOVEL MOLECULE IN VITILIGO

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Introduction: Vitiligo is a common acquired pigmentary disorder which has a significant impact on the quality of life of the affected individuals. Response to existing therapies, most of which are immunosuppressive, is highly variable. Apremilast, a novel oral phosphodiesterase 4 inhibitor, is being evaluated as a treatment option in vitiligo.

Objective: To evaluate the therapeutic efficacy and safety of apremilast in vitiligo and the effect of this treatment on quality of life.

Materials and Methods: A total of 54 patients of vitiligo aged more than 15 years, were enrolled in the study after informed consent. They were instructed to take a single tablet of apremilast 30 mg once daily . The assessment of re-pigmentation was done photographically and by Vitiligo Area Severity Index (VASI) every four weeks for 6 months. The side effects reported were recorded. Patients were asked to complete the Disability Life Quality Index (DLQI) questionnaire containing 10 items at the start and end of treatment.

Results: Generalised , acrofacial , segmental and mucosal vitilgo was seen in 40, 7, 4 and 2 patients respectively. There was statistically significant reduction in VASI and DLQI scores (p value<0.00) in the study group. Minor side effects like headache, nausea, vomiting and loose stools were observed in 7 patients which improved over time. 2 patients withdrew from the study due to these side effects and 3 patients withdrew due to other reasons. It was seen that early responders had better overall outcome. Minimal re-pigmentation was seen in mucosal and segmental vitiligo.

Conclusion: Apremilast is a safe, immunomodulatory drug which showed promising results in vitiligo. It is effective in inducing disease stability as well as repigmentation of vitiligo lesions. Further studies are required to elucidate its long term effects.