



PRURITUS

CHRONIC PRURIGO AND ITS TREATMENT: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE GERMAN GUIDELINE

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Background: Chronic prurigo was recently defined as being an own disease entity which is characterized by the presence of chronic pruritus and single to multiple usually symmetrically distributed pruriginous nodules, papules and/or plaques. Chronic prurigo leads to a restricted quality of life and a high burden ranging from sleep problems, to social and work-related limitations, including also negative feelings of stigmatization due to visible scratch lesions. Chronic prurigo is difficult to treat and only a few treatment options for interrupting the vicious itch-scratch cycle are currently available. The German Guideline on chronic pruritus summarizes the evidence of current therapies for chronic prurigo.

Observation: First line therapies consist of topical steroids, calcineurin inhibitors, capsaicin, phototherapy, and a systemic application of antihistamines. Second line includes anticonvulsants, μ -opioid receptor antagonists and immunosuppressants. However, due to a greater understanding of the pathogenesis of chronic prurigo, novel therapy targets addressing neuronal transmission and molecular signaling pathways are currently in phase II and phase III trials. Ongoing randomized controlled trials conducted on novel targets, including antagonists against interleukin-31, neurokinin-1 receptor, and opioid receptors.

Key message: The treatment options for chronic prurigo are still rare but recommendations are summarized in current guidelines. Innovative therapies are under clinical review which target directly involved signaling pathways.

