

Study and Therapy News

Tetracycline Treatment of Confluent and Reticulate Papillomatosis. An Internet-based Survey of 31 Patients

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Introduction

Confluent and reticulate papillomatosis of Gougerot and Carteaud (GC) is an unusual disorder of keratinization of unknown aetiology (1). Neither textbooks nor articles indexed in PubMed provide well-documented recommendations for treatment based on controlled studies.

The Danish dermatology homepage, Danderm (<http://www.danderm->

[pdv.is.kkh.dk](http://www.danderm-pdv.is.kkh.dk)) includes an atlas of dermatology (<http://www.danderm-pdv.is.kkh.dk/atlas/Index.html>), and for those not familiar with the disease, the atlas includes illustrations of GC in Index I group 5.

Since 1998, the password-protected segment of Danderm has included a mailing list, and approximately 80% of Danish dermatologists actively participate in this mailing list. When the question of how to treat GC came up, many suggestions were offered. The most consistently recommended treatment was tetracycline. In the literature, minocycline is the most commonly recommended treatment. This antibiotic is not on the Danish market.

We decided to set up a Danderm online questionnaire in order to conduct a systematic enquiry about treatments of GC used by the participating dermatologists, including demographic data on the patients treated. The enquiry was carried out over a period of two weeks. The mailing list was used to issue 2 reminders to participate in the survey.

Results

Data for 31 patients (24 women and 5 men, 2 of unreported gender) were entered. The ages of the patients ranged from 16 to 31 years with a median of 25.5 years.

It was reported that 27 of the 31 patients with GC had been treated with tetracycline and that the GC of all the patients had cleared. For 25 patients the dose was 1 g/day; the 2 other patients were treated with 250 mg or 500 mg. Treatment was generally given for at least 4 weeks.

The dermatologists who participated in the questionnaire survey had also tried various other treatments. Five patients had been given topical treatment with calcipotriol. The dermatosis of one of the 5 patients cleared, while 4 did not respond to treatment.

Thirteen patients had been treated with topical antifungals. Six of these patients responded to treatment, and 7 did not. None of 3 patients treated with systemic antifungals responded, nor did 3 patients treated with topical retinoids.

Discussion

Although this study was retrospective and open, it is interesting that we could receive information about the treatment of 31 patients with a rarely reported skin disease in just 2 weeks. The information was gathered from dermatologists in private practice who normally do not publish case reports.

There are small case-series reports of the treatment of GC with minocycline and oxytetracycline and indi-

vidual case reports (3-7). No controlled studies have been published.

We find an internet-based survey of the type described here to be useful. A similar method would be applicable for prospective studies of other uncommon skin diseases. International studies of this type would be easy to carry out and extremely useful.

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