

Continuing Medical Education

CME MCQ – 10

Focus on Combination Therapy to Treat Moderate to Severe Psoriasis

In patients with moderate-to-severe psoriasis, remission can be difficult to achieve and sustain. Using two or more therapies is thus the rule rather than the exception for most patients with moderate-to-severe psoriasis, but picking a combination that serves to balance safety and efficacy needs careful consideration, especially since no evidence-based treatment guidelines exist.

1. The concept of combining ultraviolet B (UVB) phototherapy plus tar *has been named*.
 - A. Combination therapy
 - B. Goeckerman regimen
 - C. Rational therapy
 - D. Sequential therapy
2. Which of the following combinations are *not* considered synergistic (i.e. with combined effectiveness and/or safety better than that of each agent alone):
 - A. Methotrexate and UVB
 - B. Methotrexate and cyclosporine
 - C. UVB and topical steroids
 - D. Psoralen plus ultraviolet A (PUVA) and calcipotriol
3. Combinations that are *generally* contraindicated:
 - A. Narrowband UVB and PUVA
 - B. Cyclosporine and mycophenolate mofetil
 - C. Methotrexate and azathioprine
 - D. Cyclosporine and PUVA
 - E. Acitretin and phototherapy

Recommended answers based on Mark Lebwohl et al: Combination therapy to treat moderate to severe psoriasis (Review), J Am Acad Dermatol 2004; 50, 416-430.

1. B: Dr William H. Goeckerman (1925) was the first to report on successful use of tar and ultraviolet light to treat psoriasis. This was a therapeutic breakthrough that remains a highly effective treatment for psoriasis.

2. C: A review of seven reports evaluating the efficacy of combined UVB and topical steroids found no dose-sparing or therapeutic advantage in six of the reports. In fact, steroid use with UVB may shorten remission.

3. C+D: Concurrent use of agents that will simultaneously suppress bone marrow production should be avoided in the great majority of patients. The combination of cyclosporine and PUVA is potentially dangerous and documented by the clearly increased risk of squamous cell cancer.