

## Therapeutic Abstracts

### Intramuscular Alefacept Improves Health-Related Quality of Life in Patients with Chronic Plaque Psoriasis

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**Background:** Psoriasis profoundly affects patient quality of life (QOL). Amevive<sup>®</sup> (alefacept), a novel and selective biologic agent, was clinically effective and significantly improved QOL in a phase 2 study. **Methods:** The present placebo-controlled, randomized phase 3 study examined the effects of a 12-week course of intramuscular alefacept on QOL in 507 patients with chronic plaque psoriasis using both dermatology-specific questionnaires [Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI); Dermatology Quality of Life Scales (DQOLS)] and the Short Form-36<sup>™</sup> Health Survey (SF-36), a generic, general health questionnaire. **Results:** All 3 QOL measures (DLQI, DQOLS, SF-36) demonstrated that alefacept 15 mg was significantly more effective than placebo in improving QOL in patients with chronic plaque psoriasis. In addition, the improvements in QOL for patients in the alefacept 15 mg group were of similar magnitude for all 3 QOL measures. **Conclusion:** The findings of this study are an important addition to the QOL literature for psoriasis treatments.

### Treatment of Old World Cutaneous Leishmaniasis with Intralesionally Injected Meglumine Antimoniate Using a Dermojet Device

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Pentavalent antimonial compounds, the mainstay in the treatment of the various forms of leishmaniasis, have considerable toxicity, are difficult to administer and expensive. We describe a safe and efficient therapeutic modality using a spring-loaded and air-powered device for the intralesional injection of a high-velocity meglumine antimoniate microspray in a patient with cutaneous leishmaniasis.

### CO<sub>2</sub> Laser Treatment of Warts in Immunosuppressed Patients

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**Background:** A large proportion of chronically immunosuppressed patients suffer from recalcitrant viral warts. Furthermore, the incidence of nonmelanoma skin cancer is clearly elevated in this patient group and human papillomavirus is most likely to play a causal role in these neoplasms. **Objective:** To analyze the effectiveness of treatment of viral warts with the CO<sub>2</sub> laser in immunosuppressed patients. **Methods:** Multiple viral warts of 13 patients with immunosuppression, a majority of them renal allograft recipients, were treated with CO<sub>2</sub> laser in local or regional anesthesia. In case of recurrences, the lesions were treated again after 3 months. **Results:** 12 of 13 patients experienced dramatic improvement after 1-3 treatment sessions, 6 of these patients showed full remission. Side effects such as postoperative pain or scarring were minimal. **Conclusion:** CO<sub>2</sub> laser treatment of recalcitrant warts in immunosuppressed patients shows promising results which are comparable to those in immunocompetent hosts. This offers a welcome enlargement of the array of therapies in this otherwise difficult-to-treat group of patients and may contribute to the reduction of risk factors for nonmelanoma skin cancer.

### Bexarotene Is a New Treatment Option for Lymphomatoid Papulosis

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**Background:** Lymphomatoid papulosis (LyP) is a clonal T cell proliferation with large cell histology, a chronic course, and an increased risk of lymphoma. Bexarotene (Targretin<sup>®</sup>) is an RXR-selective retinoid (rexinoid) approved for the cutaneous manifestations of cutaneous T cell lymphoma. **Objective:** To determine whether bexarotene is effective in treating LyP. **Methods:** Ten patients with chronic and symptomatic LyP were prospectively treated with oral (n = 3) or topical gel (n = 7) formulations of bexarotene. **Results:** A favorable response to bexarotene treatment with decreased numbers or duration of lesions was seen in all with objective responses in 8 patients. **Conclusions:** Bexarotene may be an effective palliative treatment for LyP, warranting further controlled studies.

### Treatment of Psoriatic Nails with Topical Cyclosporin: A Prospective, Randomized Placebo-Controlled Study

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**Background:** Nail involvement is a frequent event in the course of psoriasis causing severe distress. While systemic



cyclosporin (CsA) represents a well-established therapy of psoriasis, its topical use is limited by the difficult penetration of the molecule through the skin and the nail because of its highly lipophilic nature. **Objectives:** We carried out a prospective randomized placebo-controlled study in order to analyze the effectiveness and tolerability of topical oil-dissolved 70% CsA solution in nail psoriasis. **Methods:** Sixteen adult patients with nail psoriasis, divided randomly into two groups of 8 patients (group A and group B), were treated respectively with a 70% maize-oil-dissolved oral CsA solution and maize oil alone. To compare the therapeutic effectiveness, all patients were evaluated, before starting the treatment and after 12 weeks of therapy, by the same dermatologists. The patients were also asked to assess the severity of their nail involvement at baseline and at the end of the treatment. **Results:** In group A, 3 patients came to a complete resolution of nail lesions and 5 showed a substantial improvement of the overall severity score. In group B, a slight improvement was noted in only 1 patient. All the patients of group A judged positively the results of the therapy, while in group B only 1 patient reported a moderate improvement. **Conclusion:** Our results show that topical therapy with oral CsA solution is a safe, effective and cosmetically highly acceptable treatment modality for nail psoriasis. The ability of CsA to influence keratinocyte proliferation and T-cell lymphokine release, reducing the cornification of the upper layers of the epidermis, may prevent the typical alterations observed in nail psoriasis.

#### **Treatment of chromomycosis by cryosurgery with liquid nitrogen: 15 years' experience**

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Twenty-two chromomycosis patients treated by cryosurgery with liquid nitrogen as the sole or associated therapy were studied. Diagnosis was confirmed by direct examination of KOH cleared specimens, culture, and histology, according to a method previously described by Pimentel *et al.* (Pimentel ERA, Castro LGM, Cucé LC, Sampaio SAP. Treatment of chromomycosis by cryosurgery with liquid nitrogen. *J Dermatol Surg Oncol* 1989; **15**: 72-77). Small lesions were frozen in a single session, whilst larger lesions were frozen in small parts. All patients received double freeze-thaw cycles. An author-created severity index, based on the extent of the diseased area, number of lesions, presence of complications (lymphedema, ulceration, and secondary infection) and unresponsiveness to previous treatments, was used to determine disease severity. **Conclusions** Cryosurgery with liquid nitrogen is an option in the treatment of chromomycosis.

#### **308-nm excimer laser for the treatment of localized vitiligo**

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**Background and Objective** Vitiligo is commonly treated with PUVA, and more recently, narrow-band UVB (NBUVB) phototherapy. Given the proximity of the wavelengths of NBUVB (311 nm) and the excimer laser (308 nm), we undertook a clinical trial to test the efficacy of this device.

**Methods** Twice-weekly 308-nm UV-B radiation was given to selected vitiligo lesions for a maximum of 60 treatments. These lesions had been unsuccessfully treated previously with at least one other method of treatment. Initial doses were 100 mJ/cm<sup>2</sup> with increments of 10-25%. Improvement was assessed on a visual scale via serial photographs.

**Results** Subjects tolerated the treatment well. Improvement varied with body site. After 60 treatments, lesions on the hands and feet showed grade 2 improvement in 2/10 subjects and grade 1 in 8/10. For the axillae, there was grade 4 improvement in 1/3 subjects and grade 2 improvement in 2/3 by treatment 60. The face demonstrated the most rapid repigmentation with grade 4 repigmentation seen in 3/5 subjects by 40 treatments and grade 3 in 2/5 by 30 treatments. There were no adverse effects.

**Conclusions** The user-friendly 308-nm excimer laser allows targeted treatments of localized vitiligo.

#### **Treatment of cutaneous leishmaniasis by photodynamic therapy**

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**Background:** Cutaneous leishmaniasis represents a common health problem and standard treatments are often ineffective or yield poor cosmetic results.

**Objective:** We compared the efficacy of photodynamic therapy (PDT) with paromomycin sulfate in 10 lesions of cutaneous leishmaniasis.

**Methods:** Five lesions were treated by PDT with Metvix (Photocure, Oslo, Norway) and 75 J/cm<sup>2</sup> red light. PDT was performed twice weekly and, after 12 weeks, once weekly. The other 5 lesions were treated with paromomycin sulfate once daily. All nonresponding lesions of the paromomycin-treated plaques finally also underwent PDT.

**Results:** All 5 lesions treated by PDT and 2 of the paromomycin sulfate-treated plaques were clinically and histologically *Leishmania* free. Three lesions with poor response to paromomycin sulfate finally responded to subsequent PDT. Ten months after therapy there was no recurrence, and cosmetic outcome after PDT was excellent.

**Conclusion:** PDT may be an effective therapeutic alternative in cutaneous leishmaniasis.