Early Treatment with Imiquimod 5% Cream of Periungual Warts in Vietnam: The Poorer, the Better

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Abstract

Aim: To evaluate the efficacy of imiquimod 5% in periungual wart treatment.

Material and Methods: A group of 40 patients were recruited to apply imiquimod 5% cream once daily for 5 consecutive days per week in 8 weeks. They were classified into 3 levels: Mild (the total lesion area ≤ 25 mm²), moderate (25 mm² < total lesion area ≤ 50 mm²), severe (total lesion area > 50 mm²). The outcome was evaluated at the 4th and the 8th week. The result was graded as excellent (complete clearance), good (≥ 50% clearance) and poor (< 50% clearance).

Results: The total area of the wart lesion got decreased significantly from the beginning to the 4th and the 8th week (36.7 mm² vs 16.8 mm², p = 0.0001 and 16.8 mm² vs 8.8 mm², p = 0.01). The complete clearance rate at the 4th week was lower than that at the 8th week significantly (22.5% vs 72.5%, p = 0.04). The clearance rate of patients suffering severe warts was lower significantly than that of mild/moderate patients (82.8% vs 45.5%, p = 0.03). The duration of the disease in people who responded completely to imiquimod was shorter than that of patients partially responded (10.2 ± 14.1 months vs 22.3 ± 14.3 months, p = 0.02). Adverse effects were not common, mild and local only. Recurrence rate after 6 months of follow up was 3.5%.

Conclusion: In conclusion, imiquimod 5% cream is a safe and effective drug in the treatment of periungual warts.

Introduction

Periungual warts a common skin disease and can interfere with nails development, mainly in immunosuppressed patients [1], [2].

Tissue destruction therapy is painful, and the recurrence is frequent. Imiquimod is a topical immunosuppressive agent, which stimulates the production of inflammatory cytokines that activate and maintain cell-mediated immune response [3].

This study aimed to evaluate the efficacy of imiquimod 5%, once daily for 5 consecutive days per week, in periungual wart treatment in 40 Vietnamese patients, including 19 females (aged 20.4 ± 13.8) and 21 males (aged 27.3 ± 13.5) patients.
Results

The warts condition before the treatment was mild in 21 patients (52.5%) (the total lesion area ≤ 25 mm²), moderate in 8 patients (20.0%) (25 mm² - total lesion area ≤ 50 mm²) and severe in 11 patients (27.5%) (total lesion area > 50 mm²). The duration of disease was 13.5 ± 15.0 months.

No systemic side effects have been reported. Local side effects had been seen in 37.5% patients, but 73.33% of the side effect was mild.

After 6 months of follow-up, there was only one relapse case (3.5%) after 3 months.

Discussion

Excellent results in a group of patients suffering mild/moderate wart were higher than that of the group having severe wart (82.8% vs 45.5%, p = 0.03). So longer the duration of disease was, the less effective the treatment modality was [4], [5], [6].

There was only one relapse case after 3 months. It could be explained by the ability of imiquimod cream that can start and maintain HPV specific cell-mediated immunity [7], [8], [9], [10].

In conclusions, Imiquimod 5% cream is safe and effective drug in the treatment of perianungal warts. Early treatment leads to better results.

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