

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EFFICACY OF CETIRIZINE VERSUS ASTEMIZOLE IN CHRONIC IDIOPATHIC URTICARIA

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Efficacy of Cetirizine and Astemizole was compared in 50 cases of chronic Idiopathic urticaria. Patients were divided into 2 groups viz A and B. Before starting the therapy, routine investigations were carried out to rule out any septic focus. Prior to treatment, 1 week before all medications were withdrawn. Cetirizine and Astemizole, 10mg each, were given as a single daily morning dose for 1 month and patients were followed up for 1 month.

40% excellent response was observed with cetirizine while 20% excellent response with Astemizole. Good response was observed in 32% patients with Cetirizine and 28% with Astemizole. No side effects were observed except sedation, 8% in Cetirizine group and 20% with Astemizole group.

Key Words : Chronic urticaria, Cetirizine, Astemizole

Introduction

Urticaria may be described as transient succulent, circumscribed, oedematous and itchy eruptions on the skin which usually lasts for a few hours to couple of days. When urticarial attacks continue for more than 3 months it is considered as chronic urticaria.¹

Cetirizine and Astemizole are both potent H₁ receptor blockers which inhibit histamine induced weal and flare.^{2,3} Cetirizine also inhibit antigen antibody induced eosinophilic migration.⁴ Both are claimed to be devoid of sedative and anticholinergic effects.⁵ This study compares the effect and side effects of both drugs in chronic idiopathic urticaria.

Materials and Methods

50 patients with chronic idiopathic urticaria were selected from outdoor patients

of Skin, V D and Leprosy department of Civil Hospital, Ahmedabad. The youngest was 10 years old, and the oldest 51. They were investigated to rule out any underlying cause for their urticaria. They had atleast symptoms of 3 months duration. All their medications were stopped. Their urine, stool and blood were analyzed.

They were divided into two group A & B. Group A received Certirizine 10mg once daily. Group B received Astemizole 10mg once daily.

Patients had lesions in the form of urticaria with erythema (19- each group), dermographism (A-5, B-4), Angioedema (A-1, B-2). Patients were followed every week for 1 month. Drug was continued for 1 month or till patients responded, which ever was earlier. They were followed for 1 month to watch for recurrences.

Results

Observations were recorded and were analyzed as shown in the table. The results were graded according to the subjective and objective norms.

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Objective Evaluation

0	=	No sign or absence of lesions	=	Excellent.
1	=	Marked decrease in erythema and nos of lesions	=	Good.
2	=	Moderate decrease in nos of lesions	=	Fair.
3	=	No response or very little response	=	Poor.

Subjective Evaluation

0	=	No symptoms and recurrence for 2 months	=	Excellent.
1	=	Mild itching or irritation without interference with sleep & recurrence within 2 months	=	Good.
2	=	Intermittent itching with possible interference with sleep & immediate recurrence on withdrawal on drugs	=	Fair.
3	=	Continuous irritation and itching with disturbed sleep	=	Poor.

Comments

Cetirizine and Astemizole are both newer H-1 receptor blockers claimed to be devoid of sedative and anticholinergic effect. Daily dose of 10mg. OD is optimal for both.

Present study shows that drugs are definitely effective in chronic idiopathic urticaria. Excellent results were 40% with cetirizine and 20% with astemizole.

Good response was present in 32% with cetirizine and 28% with astemizole (Table I).

Table I. Response

Response	Group A Cetirizine		Group B Astemizole	
	OE	SE	OE	SE
O=Excellent	10 (40%)	10 (40%)	5 (20%)	5 (20%)
1= Good	8 (32%)	8 (32%)	7 (28%)	7 (28%)
2= Fair	3 (12%)	3 (12%)	3 (12%)	3 (12%)
3= Poor	4 (16%)	4 (16%)	10 (40%)	10 (40%)

These results are comparable with other reported study.⁷

As regards the side effects, 2 patients developed sedation in group A while 5 patients (20%) had sedation in group B. (Table II)

The better effect of cetirizine may be attributed to its dual action as it blocks eosinophilic migration.^{4,8} No other side effects were observed in both drugs. More clinical trial with large number of patients with long duration - follow-ups, however must be performed before conclusions can be drawn about the cetirizine - astemizole comparison.

Table II. Side Effects

Side effects	Group A Cetirizine	Group B Astemizole
Sedation	2 (8%)	5 (20%)
GIT Disturbance	---	---
Dryness of mouth	---	---
Increased Appetite	---	---
Miscellaneous	---	---

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