

SULFASALAZINE IN PSORIASIS

To the Editor

I read with interest the article by Bharti and Girgl,¹ regarding efficacy of sulfasalazine in psoriasis. It is heartening to note that the reported efficacy of sulfasalazine is equivalent to that of methotrexate. But, certain points in the article need clarifications.

Firstly, the criteria used in the study (erythema, scaling and thickness) is too subjective and difficult to follow for this type of psoriasis as, different lesions can have different severity. PASI scoring which is the most accepted subjective method and which considers surface area involvement along with regional variation of lesional severity could have better suited the study.

Secondly, authors have sought to project sulfasalazine as safe vis-a-vis methotrexate. But in the pilot study by Gupta et al,² almost all patients of psoriasis treated with sulfasalazine had various side effects and 6 patients out of total 32 had to drop out because of side effects. Similar side effects have been documented by other studies also.^{3,4}

Thirdly, we feel that the doses of both methotrexate (2.5 mg thrice weekly) and sulfasalazine (1.5 g day) used in the study are lower than the generally followed doses. The dose of sulfasalazine as used by Gupta et al² was 3-4 g day. In Weinstein - Frost regimen,⁵ methotrexate, 2.5 mg thrice a week at 12 hrs intervals is only the testing dose. For more severe disease it often requires doses

more than 5 mg thrice a week. If the authors felt that the doses used in the study were adequate, then they could have avoided topical steroids and salicylic acid.

Finally, for a therapeutic trial like this, an appropriate statistical analysis would have given more credibility to the theme of the study.

Sulfasalazine which has started with an impressive note remains to be seen whether it keeps up its promise or whether it becomes just listed in the 'also used' category of antipsoriatic therapies.

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