

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Madam,

I read with interest the article 'Photochemotherapy in Psoriasis with special reference to PUVA' written by A. K. Dutta and S. B. Mandal (Indian Journal of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology 45 : 18-20, 1979). Though the authors are entitled to give their opinion based on their observation I feel their impression could be misleading.

Psorline-P does not contain 8-methoxypsoralen (derived from the Egyptian plant *Ammi majus* Linn) but contains Psoralen (derived from the Indian plant *Psoralea Corylifolia*). Most of the workers in this field have chosen 8-methoxypsoralen since it is experienced by many that the phototoxic property of the other two psoralens viz. psoralen and Trimethyl-psoralen is less compared to 8-MOP. The authors of the above study claim the beneficial effect of PUVA with 8-MOP and sunlight but they have used psoralen in fact. I doubt if the required photo toxicity could be achieved with the initial dose of the drug and sunlight exposure given to their patients.

There were no controls used in this study. A group of patients with a comparable degree of involvement should have been put on a placebo plus sunlight exposure or better still would have been a paired comparison on the lines designed by Parrish et al. The authors stated that the patients had their usual recurrences in winter which in other words could mean that they had their remissions in other seasons. So the possibility of a spontaneous remission cannot be ruled out as it is not clearly mentioned in which particular season of the year the study was undertaken.

Reference

1. Parrish JA, Fitzpatrick TB, Tanenbaum et al : Photochemotherapy of psoriasis with oral methoxalen and long wave ultra violet light, New Eng J Med 291 : 1207, 1974.

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