

ABSTRACTS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE

Reversal of androgenic alopecia by minoxidil : Lack of effect of simultaneously administered intermediate doses of cyproterone acetate, Vermorken AJM, Acta Dermato-Venereol (Stockh), 1983; 63 : 268-269.

A male volunteer with frontal alopecia was treated simultaneously with 20 mg cyproterone acetate a day orally and 5 mg minoxidil topically. New hair growth was observed on the alopecic scalp after one month, and the treatment was continued for 2 months. However, the new hair were lost 4 months after discontinuing minoxidil although treatment with cyproterone acetate was continued.

A S Kumar

Direct effects of minoxidil on epidermal cells in culture, Cohen RL, Alves MAF, Weiss VC et al, J Invest Dermatol, 1984; 82 : 90-93.

Minoxidil, a potent antihypertensive agent induces generalised hypertrichosis when administered systemically or localised regrowth when applied topically to sites of severe alopecia areata. The pharmacologic mechanisms by which minoxidil stimulates hair growth are unknown. This study was designed to examine whether minoxidil has direct effect on neonatal murine epidermal cells in culture. In the presence of minoxidil, epidermal cell cultures showed a marked dose-dependent second peak of DNA synthesis 8-10 days after culture initiation. In addition, two morphologically distinct cell types appeared. Indirect immunofluorescence staining with keratin specific antibody revealed cytoplasmic keratin fibres, suggesting the epidermal origin of these cells. Our experiments demonstrate that minoxidil can affect epidermal cells in culture by altering their growth pattern and phenotypic appearance.

A S Kumar

Treatment of seborrhoeic dermatitis with topical ketoconazole (letter), Farr PM and Shuster S: Lancet, 1984; ii : 1271.

Based on the evidence that seborrhoeic dermatitis and its minor variant dandruff is a pityrosporum infection, the authors treated 5 patients with 2% ketoconazole cream. The symptoms and rash resolved in 1-4 weeks. A lotion for the scalp condition and dandruff is considered worthwhile. Even though the study is small and uncontrolled, the authors, are convinced that ketoconazole would be an effective treatment.

A S Kumar

The diagnostic challenge of non-burrowing mite bites-Cheyletiella yasguri, Shelly ED, Shelly WB, Pula JF et al : JAMA, 1984; 251 : 2690-2691.

Endemic pruritus in a family of four proved to be caused by the 'bite and run' habits of the *Cheyletiella yasguri* mites that lived on the family dog. The mystery was solved only after the 6-year-old daughter experienced an explosive attack of pruritic papules after taking a nap in the dog's sleeping box.

A S Kumar

Depigmenting action of hydroquinone depends on disruption of fundamental cell processes, Benney KB, Christopher JS, Biol MI et al : J Invest Dermatol, 1984; 82 : 308-312.

The effect of hydroquinone was studied on two established melanotic and three established non-melanotic cell lines. Hydroquinone caused inhibition of cellular metabolism by virtue of their effect on DNA and RNA synthesis, on all the cell lines tested, but the dose that caused 50% inhibition of tritiated thymidine incorpor-

ation was approximately 30 times lower for melanotic cells. Tritiated uridine incorporation was found to be 85 times more sensitive to hydroquinone in melanotic cells. These results suggest that hydroquinone exerts its depigmenting effect by selective action on the melanocyte metabolism rather than a specific effect on melanin synthesis. Further, the effects of ultraviolet irradiation on this system were found to be negligible in spite of the fact that ultraviolet irradiation in vivo stimulates melanin synthesis.

Neena Vaswani

The effect of H₁ and H₂ receptor antagonists on the dermographic response, Cook J and Shuster S: Acta Dermato-Venerol (Stockh), 1983; 63 : 260-262.

The effect of H₁ and H₂ receptor antagonists separately and in combination was studied on dermographic wealing. A double blind protocol was used and dermographism was measured as the diameter of weal response to a measured force. Both H₁ and H₂ antagonists had a small but non-significant effect, but the combination of H₁ and H₂ antagonists had an approximately additive effect which was significant.

Although this indicates a role for H₂ receptors in dermographism, it does not establish the degree of involvement, nor whether H₂ antagonists necessarily have any advantage over a potent H₁ blocker alone in the treatment of dermographism.

A S Kumar

Fixed drug eruptions on male genitalia : Clinical and aetiologic study, Pandhi RK, Kumar AS, Satish DA et al : Sex Trans Dis, 1984; 11 : 164-166.

Fixed drug eruptions exclusively involving the genitalia of 60 male patients were investigated. Forty two of the 60 patients completed the oral provocation test undertaken to identify the causative drug. Tetracycline in 15 cases, aspirin in 7, metamizole in 6, trimethoprim-sulphamethoxazole in 3 and oxyphenbutazone in 3 were found to be the common aetiologic agents. The sites affected were the glans penis, coronal sulcus and preputial skin. Superficial ulceration or pigmented areas surrounded by an erythematous halo were the main clinical findings at the time of presentation.

A S Kumar