

What's New in Dermatology—2010



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Over the past year, there have been many interesting developments in the field of dermatology. An old antiseptic has made a reprise as a treatment for skin colonized by *Staphylococcus aureus* in the management of atopic dermatitis. The presentation of Acanthosis nigricans is on the rise, paralleling the disturbing increase in the incidence of insulin-resistance in young people. Over the past year, more incriminating information has been publicized about the dangers of artificial tanning, providing justification for the opposition to indoor tanning expressed by dermatologists. There has also been an update from the North American Contact Dermatitis Group on the top ten allergens found by patch-testing. Some interesting data has been published regarding a relatively new and very useful agent, voriconazole, that should make one cautious. In addition, a new agent, imiquimod, has been approved for use in the management of actinic keratoses.

Huang JT, et al. Treatment of Staphylococcus Aureus Colonization in Atopic Dermatitis Decreases Disease Severity. Pediatrics 123:e808, 2009

In this study, 31 children (6 months to 17-years-old) suffering from atopic dermatitis with signs of secondary bacterial infection, were investigated for their response to bleach baths and

intranasal mupirocin. The treatment group was bathed twice a week using a one-half-cup of bleach added to 40 gallons of bathwater, soaking for 5 to 10 minutes. They were also treated with intranasal mupirocin cream applied twice a day for five days. The control group was provided with baths without the added bleach and simple petrolatum applied to the nares. They were assessed by EASI (Eczema Area Severity Index) at one and three months. The EASI scores were found to be significantly better for the treatment group when compared with the control group, but only below the neck. This study suggests a possible role for bleach baths in children prone to secondary Staphylococcal infections complicating atopic dermatitis.

Brickman WJ et al. Acanthosis Nigricans Identifies Youth at High Risk for Metabolic Abnormalities. J Pediatr 156:87, 2010

This paper reiterates what has been suspected for some time; that is, acanthosis nigricans is a cutaneous finding that identifies children at risk for type 2 diabetes mellitus, and that they are at a high risk for cardiac disease. Those with acanthosis nigricans tended to demonstrate abnormal glucose tolerance (29%), elevated blood pressure over the 95th percentile (27%), and low HDL cholesterol (50%).

El Ghissasi T et al. A review of Human Carcinogens – Part D: Radiation. Lancet Oncol 10:751, 2009

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is a section of the WHO that studies strategies for cancer prevention and control. They reported a meta-analysis that showed that, if regular use of indoor tanning started prior to the age of 30, the risk for the development of malignant melanoma increased by 75%. They concluded that indoor tanning should be ranked along with X-ray and gamma ray radiation as a carcinogens.

Zug KA, et al. Patch-test results of the North American Contact Dermatitis Group 2005 to 2006. Dermatitis 20:149, 2009

The results of this study, using a survey of patch testing, which included a panel of 65 allergens in 4,454 subjects. The most frequent sites affected by contact allergy were the hands and face. The top-ten most common allergens for 2009 were:

- Nickel
- Balsam of Peru (fragrance mix)
- Fragrance Mix 1, 4) Quaternium-15 (a preservative)
- Neomycin
- Bacitracin
- Formaldehyde,

- Methyl-dibromo glutaronitrile (a common ingredient in household cleaners)
- Paraphenylenediamine (brown hair colouring)

They identified nickel, bacitracin, quaternium-15, chromate, and tea tree oil as allergens on the increase.

Cowen EW, et al. Chronic Phototoxicity and Aggressive Squamous Cell Carcinoma of the Skin in Children and Adults During Treatment with Voriconazole. J Am Acad Dermatol 62:31,2010

This paper reports that eight relatively young patients (two were children, two were in their twenties and the rest were relatively young to middle-aged), developed multiple squamous cell carcinomas and chronic photoaging while taking voriconazole after a relatively short time of 13 to 60 months. Voriconazole is a new antifungal agent that has been found to be very effective in managing systemic fungal infections in patients suffering from immunosuppression.

New Drug Developments

Imiquimod cream 3.75% (Zyclara® - Graceway Pharmaceuticals) has been approved in Canada for the treatment of multiple actinic keratoses on the face and bald scalp. After an initial treatment phase of two weeks (applied all over the affected area) the patient takes two weeks off and follows with a second course of two weeks.

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