

5-aminolevulinic acid based photodynamic therapy for basal cell carcinoma: A 10-years follow-up study

Dear Editor,

I read the recent paper by Griškjans Z et al. on 10-year follow-up after topical aminolevulinic acid (ALA) – photodynamic therapy (PDT) in basal cell carcinoma (BCC) with great interest (1). By 10 year follow-up the complete response rate was 80%. One recurrent tumour appeared later than 3, 6 years post treatment. Topical PDT has proved to be effective in treating BCC with high tumour clearance rates shown 5 years after treatment (2). However, evidence suggests that up to 18% of recurrent BCC present between 5 and 10 years following standard therapeutic procedures (3). 10-year recurrence rates of primary BCCs after surgery, radiotherapy and curettage and electrodesiccation are shown to be 7.0, 10.4 and 18.2%, respectively (4). Hence, prolonged follow-up data on topical PDT in BCC is required for evaluation and for comparison of PDT efficacy with standard procedures. So far, the publication of such data has been limited. In a cohort study of 60 BCCs in 44 patients, the 10-year complete response rate after two sessions with curettage and topical ALA-based PDT was 87% (5). For primary tumours only, the response rate was 90%. All BCC recurrences appeared within 3 years after treatment. The results reported by Griškjans Z et al. add important evidence to these data, showing that topical ALA-based PDT of BCC may give high and sustained efficacy over 10 years. The results are also comparable to results after various standard therapeutic procedures.

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