

SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT OF FOLLICULITIS DECALVANS, ACNE KELOIDALIS, AND FOLLICULAR DEGENERATION SYNDROME USING COMBINATION THERAPY OF ORAL RIFAMPICIN/CEPHALEXIN

ABSTRACT

Objective: To describe the successful treatment of folliculitis decalvans, acne keloidalis, and follicular degeneration syndrome using combination therapy of oral rifampicin 300mg and cephalexin 500mg, twice daily, and allowing continuation of other medications (OTC shampoos, etc.), including concomitant use of topical steroid-antibiotic compounds, and irrespective of hair grooming practices.

Design: A single-center, retrospective, observational study.

Setting: Center for Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery (Washington D. C.).

Methods: A review of patient records from July 1999 to January 2002 was conducted to identify patients with scalp tenderness, pruritus, and thinning of scalp hair. Three hundred forty patients were initially identified and 23 patients met the final patient criteria. Patients were treated with a 2-week course of oral rifampicin 300mg and cephalexin 500mg, twice daily. Patients were evaluated at baseline, at 1 month, and at 6 months. All patients were told to continue their routine hair care practices. Scalp biopsies were obtained in eight patients at baseline. On the follow up visits, evaluations included the assessment of patient symptoms; scalp and hair examinations as well as clinical photographs were taken.

Results: We observed successful treatment in 87% of patients with primary scarring alopecia, marked by not only by improvement of signs and symptoms of disease, but also by the duration of remission. We also suggest that if the inflammation is more superficial, and hair follicles are treated early, scarring may be prevented.

Conclusion: We report a high rate of response to a 2-week course of combination therapy with oral rifampicin 300mg and cephalexin 500mg, irrespective of hair grooming practices. Since both drugs have a favorable safety profile, and appear to have a synergistic effect in the treatment of primary scarring alopecia, we recommend this regimen as an excellent treatment alternative or option to other reported treatments.