A clinical comparison and long-term follow-up of topical 5-fluorouracil versus laser resurfacing in the treatment of widespread actinic keratoses.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES: Many treatment modalities exist for actinic keratoses (AK). Topical 5-fluorouracil (5-FU) has been one of the standard treatments. Laser resurfacing is a more recent treatment option. In the literature prospective randomized studies comparing these treatments are lacking.

STUDY DESIGN/PATIENTS AND METHODS: Prospective randomized study to compare topical 5-FU with Er:YAG laser resurfacing. Fifty-five patients with multiple AK on the scalp and or the face were included. Clinical and histopathological evaluation took place at 3, 6, and 12 months after treatment.

RESULTS: At 3, 6, and 12 months after treatment, there were significantly less recurrences in the laser group compared to the group of patients treated with 5-FU. Side effects did occur more frequently in the laser group, especially erythema and hypopigmentation.

CONCLUSIONS: Compared to treatment with topical 5-FU, Er:YAG laser resurfacing is more effective regarding recurrence rates. Although significantly more side effects occur, laser resurfacing is a useful therapeutic option especially in patients with widespread AK.

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