

”Itching, is there a remedy ? ” a pilotstudy with a rehydration gel-creme in burnpatients

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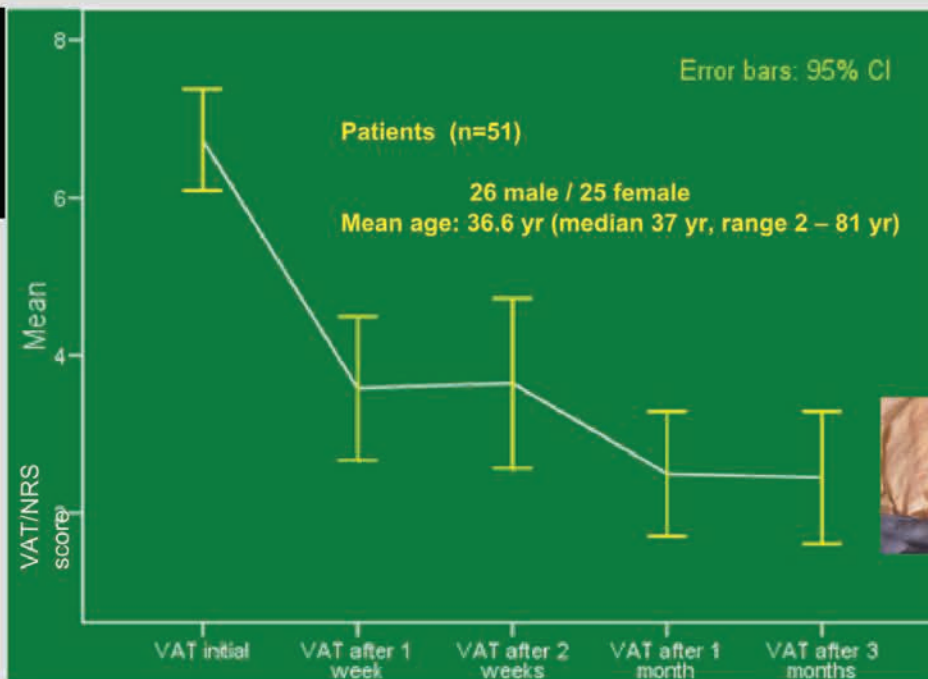
Introduction

Itching after burns is a matter of body and mind, but little is known regarding its exact mechanism. Results of studies show a gradual decrease in itch intensity in time, but still moderate to serious itch several years after burns (van Loey e.a.). In 2006 a gel-creme that supposed to decrease itch was introduced in our Burn Centre. The main ingredients of Alhydran® are Aloë Vera (Aruba Aloe Barbadenis), vitamins C and E and Jojoba oil. To determine its efficacy we performed a pilotstudy.



Methods

Since November 2006 in the outpatient clinic of the Burn Centre Medical Centre Rijnmond-Zuid itching is scored in patients using the Visual Analogue Thermometer (VAT) or the Numeric Rating Scale (NRS 0-10). Measurements were done before application of Alhydran® and after 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month and 3 months after the start of treatment. Follow up data were collected on outpatient visit or by phone.



Results

Data analyses with ANOVA and T-test show before starting Alhydran® that the mean VAT/NRS for itch intensity is 6.7(see graphic). There is a decrease in time: the mean score after one week is 3.5, after two weeks 3.6, after one month 2.5 and after three months 2.4. There is no relation between VAT/NRS and gender, age, TBSA%, location, cause of burn or combination therapy with other scar treatment. Besides a decreased VAT score parents of young children mentioned their child was more at ease and had a better night's rest. One patient had discontinued Alhydran® because there was no itch anymore after 1 week and 1 patient reduced antihistaminic medication. Two patients said they stopped the creme because of irritation of the skin.

Conclusions

“Itching can make you crazy”. Our first experience indicates that this gel-creme could decrease itch intensity after burns, which contributes to improvement of quality of life. Ongoing research will include additional assessment by a Burns Itch Questionnaire, scar evaluation like the Vancouver Scar Scale, Patients and Observer Scar Assessment Scale, cuto – and dermaspectometrie and a Quality of Life questionnaire.