

The Only Topical Retinoid Without a Generic Alternative: Tazarotene



Leon H. Kircik MD

Over the past 4 decades, topical retinoids have become standard therapy for the treatment of acne vulgaris. The market has grown to encompass multiple formulations of tretinoin and other next-generation topical retinoids such as adaplene and tazarotene. Tazarotene is unique amongst all other topical retinoids because of its dual role as a US Food and Drug Administration–approved treatment option for both acne vulgaris and psoriasis vulgaris.

A common overall impression often voiced in dermatology circles is that tazarotene is the most effective topical retinoid for acne treatment but carries the greatest risk for cutaneous irritation. Although this may be true based on many studies with the 0.1% gel formulation of tazarotene, the availability of tazarotene cream has improved the adaptability of topical tazarotene for clinicians. Additionally, tazarotene has continued to maintain its established role as a widely used and reliably effective treatment option for a range of patients with acne. As clinicians have gained experience with the product over the years, they have come up with several different ways of using tazarotene for their acne patients. One of the most recent studies demonstrated the benefits of combined use of tazarotene with topical dapson in acne patients, where dapson's unique anti-inflammatory properties may help to overcome retinoid irritation. The pages ahead explore the substantial data related to the use of tazarotene in the treatment of acne—data that taken together suggest that dermatology providers continue to rely on the drug, alone or in combination with other treatments, for many of their patients with acne.

As a final and important thought, tazarotene still does not have a generic substitution. This gives us the confidence that our patients will receive what we actually prescribe.

Leon H. Kircik MD

*Mount Sinai Medical Center, New York, NY
Indiana University School of Medicine, Indianapolis, IN
Physicians Skin Care, PLLC, Louisville, KY*

Disclosures

Dr. Kircik has served as an advisor, investigator, consultant, and speaker for Allergan, Bayer, Galderma, Promius Pharma, Quinnova, Stiefel/GSK, LeoPharma, Taro, Valeant, and Warner Chilcott.