

Bridging the Gap: Optimizing Skin Care in Acne Treatment

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To optimize the treatment of dermatologic diseases, one must recognize the interplay between maintaining the function of the skin barrier and utilizing topical medications which often disrupt the former. Many skin diseases cause a dysfunctional epidermis further establishing the need for treatments that promote and repair overall skin health. Acne vulgaris (AV) is an inflammatory skin disease for which attention to overall skin health is necessary; treatment must include a skin care regimen that supports epidermal barrier function while contributing to the overall improvement in AV.

Acne can cause scarring and permanent disfigurement which consequently results in social isolation, depression, and anxiety. Not

only does AV lead to significant emotional sequelae, it also is one of the most common skin conditions treated by dermatologists. Acne often has a prolonged course and is a chronic disease which may present past adolescence. When managing acne, many of the recommended therapies result in a disruption of the structure and function of the epidermal barrier, which paradoxically has been found to be associated with the pathogenesis of AV.¹ In particular, decreased stratum corneum thickness and increased transepidermal water loss can result from the use of medications to treat AV such as benzoyl peroxide.³ Thus, formulating a skin care regimen that balances the efficacy of medical treatment while maintaining the integrity of the epidermal barrier becomes imperative. Additionally, patients with AV may be more likely to adhere to a treatment regimen that limits the resulting irritation from disruption of the epidermal barrier. It is important to recognize that the use of an optimized skin care regimen to enhance the treatment of AV is often overlooked.

The current guidelines for the management of acne include a variety of treatment modalities, from topical and oral medications to lifestyle modification.² As a dermatologist, offering a prescription treatment regimen for each patient becomes only part of the solution to disease clearance. Educating patients and providing guidance on how to create an optimal skin care routine is a vital aspect of treating AV. With a significant increase in subscription-based skin care services, the options to curate a skin care regimen have only increased and may become overwhelming to patients. Recommendations from a dermatologist can help patients navigate this process with confidence, stay adherent to their chosen skin care regimen, and has even been found to lead to reduced signs of and symptoms of irritation.³

This study illustrates the efficacy, tolerability, and cosmetic acceptability of a unique Cetaphil skin care regimen including an acne cleanser and moisturizer. The adjunctive skin care regimen is a critical aspect of acne management as it may enhance the therapeutic benefit while reducing tolerability reactions associated with prescription treatment. As the author emphasizes, the data support the use of a combined skin care regimen as a comprehensive approach to the treatment of acne.

DISCLOSURES

Dr. Farberg is an Advisor for Galderma, Johnson & Johnson Consumer, Novartis, Orthodermatologics, and Sun Pharmaceuticals. Dr. Sharma has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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