

Topical steroids effective for scalp psoriasis**Clinical Question**

How effective are topical treatments for scalp psoriasis?

Bottom Line

Corticosteroids of high or very high potency were more effective than vitamin D. The combination product of a corticosteroid and vitamin D was of small benefit over corticosteroid monotherapy. The combination product was superior to vitamin D alone.

Corticosteroids of moderate, high and very high potency were similarly effective. There was not enough evidence to allow a final conclusion as to whether salicylic acid was of additional benefit in combination with corticosteroids. Little and mostly unreliable data suggested that the efficacy of tar or dithranol preparations was limited. There might not be a difference whether corticosteroids are used once or twice daily.

Caveat

On average, the overall quality of the evidence was moderate for the three most important comparisons that included corticosteroids, vitamin D and their combination product. Most findings were based on short-term therapies with a duration of less than six months. Thirty of the 59 studies were either conducted or sponsored by the medication manufacturer.

Context

There are a number of topical drugs in use for psoriasis, such as corticosteroids, vitamin D, tar-based preparations, tacrolimus, dithranol or salicylic acid. As psoriasis remains a long-term condition, it is of great importance to know which of the drugs work best, what kind of side effects they may have and how likely they are to occur.

Cochrane Systematic Review

[Schlager JG et al. Topical treatments for scalp psoriasis. Cochrane Reviews, 2016, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD009687.DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD009687.pub2.](#)
This review contains 59 studies involving 11,561 participants.