Treatment of Scabies with Albendazole

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Key Words
Scabies • Albendazole • Lebanon

Scabies is a highly communicable disease caused by infestation with Sarcoptes scabiei var. hominis. Current treatments for scabies include benzyl benzoate, malathion, lindane and permethrin in addition to ivermectin [1]. The latter represents the only approved oral treatment for scabies and the therapeutic option for community-based treatment. Scabies outbreaks remain a serious public health issue in Lebanon, and the failures of topical treatment modalities prove challenging to manage, given the unavailability of ivermectin in our country. We report 2 patients with scabies who were successfully treated with oral albendazole.

Observations

Case 1. A 63-year-old woman presented clinical evidence of crusted scabies. Diagnosis was ascertained by skin scrapings positive for S. scabiei. Several head-to-toe applications of benzyl benzoate and lindane had been ineffective 2 months earlier. The patient was prescribed a daily dose of 1,000 mg of albendazole with fatty meals for 3 consecutive days and an application of a 5% salicylic acid ointment once daily for 1 week. The pruritus disappeared within 5 days. Skin scrapings performed at the 1-week control visit on residual skin lesions did not reveal any Sarcoptes mites. Lesions disappeared completely within 10 days. No side effects or recurrence were observed during 3 months of follow-up.

Case 2. A 76-year-old man with Alzheimer’s disease who had previously been treated with topical benzyl benzoate and permethrin had extensive scabies. Skin scraping revealed live Sarcoptes. The patient was administered 3 daily doses of 1,000 mg of albendazole along with fatty meals. Skin lesions disappeared within 1 week. No recurrence was observed during the 2 months of follow-up.

References

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