Integrative Approach to Eczema
What is the Evidence?

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DISCLOSURE OF RELEVANT RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDUSTRY

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TREATMENT

- Anti-inflammatory
- Antipruritics
- Moisturisation
- Antibiotics

Steroid Phobia

Filters

- Some evidence
- Safety
- Practicality
Sunflower Seed Oil

- Topical application of sunflower oil increases synthesis of ceramides and has direct emollient and barrier repair properties
- It also has anti-inflammatory effects possibly via peroxisome proliferative-activated receptor-α (PPAR-α) activation

Sunflower Oleodistillate

- Sunflower oleodistillate (SOD) has beneficial effects in pediatric dermatology.

Preterm Infant Study

- N = 497 preterm infants (<33 weeks) in Bangladesh, high risk for sepsis
- Thrice daily application of sunflower seed oil vs. petroleum-based moisturizer vs. no treatment
- Sunflower seed oil reduced sepsis by 41%, with a 26% reduction in mortality!

Coconut

- Virgin coconut oil (same as “extra virgin”) is cold-pressed and uses no solvents
- 8% unsaturated fatty acids (vs 82% in virgin olive oil), especially “medium-chain fatty acids”
- Colorless and odorless, cosmically elegant

Coconut Oil

- Topically applied coconut oil decreased staph colonization by 95% in patients with atopic dermatitis when applied twice daily for 4 weeks, vs. 50% decrease in olive oil control
- Strong evidence for broad-spectrum antibacterial activity
Coconut

- Comparative study of VCO vs. mineral oil in 117 AD children (1-13 y/o; mild to moderate AD) for 8 wks
- 68% decrease in SCORAD with VCO vs. 38% with mineral oil

Massage Therapy

- 20 children with AD ages 2-8 received massage for 20 min daily vs control group with standard topical care only
- At 1 mo, parents of massaged children reported lower anxiety levels in their children
- There was significant improvement on all clinical measures including redness, scaling, lichenification, excoriation, and pruritus vs. control

Topical B12

- B12, inhibits NO synthase and has been hypothesized to prevent flares in AD patients
- In a Phase III RCT of topical B12 applied bid for eight weeks, patients treated with B12 saw significant improvement vs. placebo
- Another study in children aged six months to 18 years found significant improvement in as early as two weeks of use

TCM and Acupuncture

- 14 children with persistent AD (mean age, 5.4 years)
- Drank decoction of Erka Shizheng tea twice daily
- Soaked in herbal bath for 20 min daily
- Applied herbal cream tid to skin
- Had acupuncture treatments 2-3 times per week

TCM and Acupuncture

- Reduction in SCORAD ranging from 60% to 90% seen in 13 of the 14 patients after 3.3 months
- More than a 50% improvement in Dermatology Life-Quality Index scores were achieved in 13 of 14 patients in 2.4 months
TCM and Acupuncture

- This is not an easy regimen
- What part of this is actually helpful or is the entire regimen necessary
- In terms of cost/QOL/comfort, how does this compare with a more standard regimen?
- ...But I still think it is exciting!


Acupuncture

- 40 pts with refractory uremic pruritus randomized to:
  - Unilateral Quchi (LI11) acupuncture 3x/wk x 1 mo
  - Control was acupuncture to sham point 3x/wk x 1 mo
  - Pruritus scores at baseline, 1 mo and 3 mo
  - Significantly lower in acupuncture group at 1 and 3 months (P<0.001)


Acupressure

- 15 adults, with moderate-severe eczema
- Half applied acupressure with small bead in LI11 point for 3 min 3x per week for 4 weeks


Hypnosis and Biofeedback
Hypnosis & Biofeedback

- Stress can worsen atopic dermatitis and has been shown to directly slow the healing of the skin barrier (Muizzuddin, 2003)
- In another study, psychosocial stress and sleep deprivation were found to disrupt skin barrier function in healthy patients (Altemus, 2001)
- Some forms of alternative medicine may help AD by decreasing stress, something that we have very limited options for in allopathic medicine


Hypnosis & Biofeedback

- Study with 18 adults and 20 children with severe, resistant atopic dermatitis, treated with hypnotherapy
- Significant benefit was found both subjectively and objectively, which was maintained at up to 2 years in some patients
- 10/12 children surveyed at 18 months after the study reported continued improvement in itching and scratching, less sleep disturbance, and improvement in mood


LEAKY GUT?

Studies

- Small intestinal permeability was found to be impaired in children with atopic dermatitis and improved with lactobacillus supplementation (p=.001 on lactulose-mannitol test results)

Food allergy and AD?

Is it a cause?  
Is it a trigger?  
Is it unrelated?  

YES!

-R. Sidbury, MD

Summary

- Integrating the best conventional therapy with some complementary treatments can bring excellent results and happy patients
- My favorites:
  - Coconut oil and/or Sunflower oil
  - Acupressure
  - Massage for babies

Thank you!

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