

A-Detail™ Fact Sheet (Canada)

Imiquimod (Aldara™) Cream, 5%

Overview

Imiquimod is part of a new class of drugs called immune response modifiers, and is marketed by 3M under the name Aldara™. It stimulates the innate immune response through interferon- α production, as well as acquired immunity by activating T-helper 1 cells.

Clinical Experience

Imiquimod was first indicated and used for external genital and perianal warts/condyloma acuminata in adults. Other HPV warts have also been treated with this drug, often in combination with more conventional therapy including Cryotherapy and CO₂ laser therapy, in both immunocompetent and immunosuppressed patients. Other viral infections, such as molluscum contagiosum have also responded to this drug. Aldara is also indicated for the treatment of actinic keratosis. The second wave of therapy has used the anti-tumor effect to clear basal cell carcinomas (BCCs), lentigo malignas and Bowen's disease either alone or in combination with other treatments.

Patient and Drug Profile

Imiquimod's novel mechanism of action stimulates the body's own natural defenses to target diseased tissue.

- Imiquimod provides the best response for mucosal warts in women and uncircumcised men. Warts on regular skin can be treated by destructive therapy in combination with imiquimod.
- It is effective for use on extensive areas of AKs that are not easily treated by cryotherapy.
- It provides an effective alternative to the use of 5-FU cream or photodynamic therapy for treating AKs.
- Clinical studies have demonstrated that imiquimod is safe and effective for the treatment of superficial and nodular BCCs
- Imiquimod may be useful for treating actinic cheilitis, and as an adjunctive therapy to excision for lentigo maligna.

Dosing

Treatment must be individualized. The dosing varies according to the condition and to the patient response. In general, the more frequent the applications, the brisker the local immune response, and the more effective the therapy.

Efficacy

Experience suggests that external genital wart clearance is even better if combined with other destructive therapy such as Cryotherapy or laser. Efficacy and safety profiles are favorable for the treatment of AKs and primary sBCCs.

Side Effects, Risks, Compliance & Monitoring

Side Effects

No contraindications have been reported for this product. The side effects that are mainly seen include erythema, edema, induration, vesiculation, excoriation and scaling and flaking. The extent of these effects increases with increased dosing. Rare systemic side effects have not proven to be a concern. Imiquimod has been determined to be in Pregnancy Category B.

Risks

- Administration of imiquimod is not recommended until the skin is completely healed from any previous drug or surgical treatment.
- This cream has the potential to exacerbate inflammatory conditions of the skin.
- Phototoxicity has not been adequately assessed, and patients should be warned to avoid exposure to sunlight and to wear protective clothing when out in the sun.
- Patients with sunburn should be advised not to use Aldara™ cream until fully recovered.

Compliance

Local irritation is the most significant limiting factor for this immunomodulator. However, this irritation is a desired pharmacodynamic response. Titrating the frequency of applications is essential for optimal response and better tolerance of the therapy.

Monitoring

Patient monitoring must be individualized and will vary according to the condition being treated and to patient response.

A-Details™ "An Online Academic Drug Presentation Written By Drs. for Drs."

The content is third party, academic-based and includes clinical evidence and practical experience. View the complete A-Detail™ for Aldara™ and other drugs at www.SkinTherapyLetter.ca or www.SkinCancerGuide.ca. Just click on Physician's View and A-Details.