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IN THIS ISSUE

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IN BRIEF

OTC Differin Epiduo Gel for Acne

Differin Epiduo gel (Galderma), a fixed-dose combination of the synthetic retinoid adapalene 0.1% and the oxidizing agent benzoyl peroxide 2.5%, is now available over the counter (OTC) for topical treatment of acne in patients ≥ 12 years old. The gel will remain available by prescription in the same strength for use in patients 9-11 years old. A gel containing adapalene 0.3% and benzoyl peroxide 2.5% (*Epiduo Forte*, and generics) is available by prescription for use in patients ≥ 12 years old.

PHARMACOLOGY – Topical retinoids are often used for first-line treatment of acne, either alone or in combination with a topical antibiotic or topical benzoyl peroxide, which also has antibacterial activity. Adapalene modulates keratinization, inflammation, and differentiation of follicular epithelial cells, decreasing formation of comedones and inflammatory lesions. Retinoid/antimicrobial combinations are more effective than either component alone, particularly in patients with inflammatory acne.^{1,2}

CLINICAL STUDIES – In clinical trials, significantly more patients with acne achieved clear or almost clear skin with adapalene 0.1%/benzoyl peroxide 2.5% than with its individual components alone, with significant differences in total lesion counts detectable within 1 week (median total lesion count

decreased by 51% with the combination and by about 35% with adapalene or benzoyl peroxide alone).³

ADVERSE EFFECTS – All retinoids can cause erythema, dryness, scaling, burning, and pruritus, but adapalene is generally better tolerated than other topical retinoids. Pruritus and burning are most severe immediately after application of *Differin Epiduo* gel; these effects usually decrease over time. Benzoyl peroxide can cause irritation and allergic contact dermatitis. It can also bleach hair and colored fabrics. Retinoids are teratogenic; even though only small amounts of topical retinoids are absorbed systemically, they should not be used during pregnancy.

ADMINISTRATION – *Differin Epiduo* gel is available in 15- and 45-gram pump bottles. A thin layer of the gel should be applied to affected areas once daily. Patients should minimize exposure to sunlight, use sunscreen, and wear protective clothing. ■

1. Drugs for acne. *Med Lett Drugs Ther* 2024; 66:17.
2. RV Reynolds et al. Guidelines of care for the management of acne vulgaris. *J Am Acad Dermatol* 2024; 90:1006.e1.
3. DM Thiboutot et al. Adapalene-benzoyl peroxide, a fixed-dose combination for the treatment of acne vulgaris: results of a multicenter, randomized double-blind, controlled study. *J Am Acad Dermatol* 2007; 57:791.

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