



Oral erythromycin may be effective in treating the symptoms of pityriasis rosea

Clinical question Are there any effective interventions to treat symptoms of pityriasis rosea?

Bottom line Oral erythromycin may be effective in treating the rash and relieving the itch. There is inadequate evidence for the efficacy of most treatments (including liquorice root, local anaesthetics, penicillin, clarithromycin and oral steroids).

Caveat Limitations of this review include the small number of trials identified (3), the small number of participants involved, the inadequate methodology of two of the studies, and finding only 1 small study (40 people) that reported the clinical benefits of oral erythromycin. However, the methodological quality of this study was judged to be good.

Context Pityriasis rosea is a scaly rash that affects mainly young adults. It is relatively common, affecting about 170 out of every 100,000 people in the community each year. About 50 per cent of patients experience moderate to severe itch, but most people recover within 2 to 12 weeks.

Cochrane Systematic Review Chuh AAT et al. Interventions for pityriasis rosea. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2007, Issue 2. Article No. CD005068. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD005068.pub2.

Note: This review contains 3 small trials and 148 participants.

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