

Abstract

J Dermatolog Treat. 2006;17(4):205-10.

Zinc in skin pathology and care.

Bibi Nitzan Y, Cohen AD.

Department of Medicine, University of Massachusetts, Worcester, Massachusetts 01605-2324, USA.

OBJECTIVES: To assess the significance of zinc in the etiology of various dermatological conditions and examine the role of zinc as a mode of treatment for a wide range of dermatoses.

METHODS: Review of existing literature through searches using the PubMed site with zinc and the dermatosis in question as search words.

RESULTS: Severe zinc deficiency states such as acrodermatitis enteropathica are associated with a variety of skin manifestations, such as perioral, acral and perineal dermatitis. These syndromes can be reversed with systemic zinc repletion. In addition to skin pathologies which are clearly zinc-dependent, many dermatological conditions (e.g. dandruff, acne and diaper rash) have been associated and treated with zinc. Success rates for treatment with zinc vary depending on the disease, mode of application and zinc salt used. Usually, alternative modes of treatment are superior to zinc.

CONCLUSIONS: Generally, it seems that with the exception of systemic deficiency states, there is very little evidence to convincingly demonstrate the efficacy of zinc as a first-line treatment for any dermatological conditions. Further research is needed in order to establish the indications for zinc treatment in dermatology, optimal mode of delivery, type of compound and therapeutic indexes.

PMID: 16971312

