Abstract

Intravenous Vitamin C in the treatment of shingles: Results of a multicenter prospective cohort study.


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BACKGROUND: Vitamin C is an immune-relevant micronutrient, which is depleted in viral infections and this deficiency seems to play a critical role in the pathogenesis of herpes infections and in the development of postherpetic neuralgia. The objective of this observational multicenter study was to evaluate the utilization, safety and efficacy of intravenously administrated vitamin C in patients with shingles.

MATERIAL/ METHODS: Between April 2009 and December 2010 16 general practitioners recorded data of 67 participants with symptomatic herpes zoster who received vitamin C intravenously (Pascorbin® 7.5 g/50 ml) for approximately 2 weeks in addition to standard treatment. The assessment of pain (VAS) and the dermatologic symptoms of shingles such as hemorrhagic lesions and the number of efflorescences were investigated in a follow-up observation phase of up to 12 weeks.

RESULTS: Mean declines of pain scores (VAS), number of affected dermatomes and efflorescences, and the presence of hemorrhagic vesicles between the baseline and follow-up assessments at 2 and 12 weeks were statistically significant. Overall, 6.4% of the participants experienced post-herpetic neuralgia. Common complaints such as general fatigue and impaired concentration also improved during the study. The effects and the tolerability of the treatment were evaluated positively by the physicians. The risk of developing PHN was reduced.

CONCLUSIONS: The data presented here provide evidence that concomitant use of intravenously administered ascorbic acid may have beneficial effects on herpes zoster-associated pain, dermatologic findings and accompanying common complaints. To confirm our findings, randomized, placebo-controlled clinical studies are necessary.

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