Low-Dose Doxycycline Sufficient in Rosacea

BY DENISE NAPOLI

The jury is still out on whether rosacea has a microbial etiology, but one thing is certain: Low-dose doxycycline is as effective as higher doses, with significantly fewer side effects, Dr. Guy Webster reported at a dermatology seminar sponsored by Skin Disease Education Foundation.

The microbial theory of rosacea's etiology has several problems, according to Dr. Webster of the department of dermatology at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. In one small study, the bacterium *Bacillus oleronius*—extracted from mites found on the faces of rosacea patients—produced antigens that stimulated mononuclear cells in 16 of 22 rosacea patients (73%), compared with 5 of 17 controls (29%) (Brit. J. Derm. 2007;157: 474-81). However, many patients didn't react, while some control patients did.

The theory that *Helicobacter pylori* might be related to rosacea has problems as well, Dr. Webster noted. One study of 44 patients found rosacea improved to the same degree in patients treated with placebo as with *H. pylori* eradication therapy (Arch. Dermatol. 1999;135:659-63).

Regardless of the cause, a low, 40-mg dose of doxycycline is sufficient treatment. In a study by CollaGenex Pharmaceuticals (now Galderma Laboratories), maker of 40-mg doxycycline (Oracea), a once-daily 40-mg dose led to a decrease of 12.5 lesions by 16 weeks, vs. a decrease of 12.2 lesions in the 100-mg doxycycline group, with fewer side effects.

Dr. Webster disclosed financial relationships with Galderma, Allergan, and GlaxoSmithKline.

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