Azithromycin No Use for Pityriasis Rosea

BY ROBERT FINN
San Francisco Bureau

SAN FRANCISCO — Azithromycin had no influence on the clinical course of pityriasis rosea, according to a poster presentation of a small randomized controlled trial at the annual meeting of the Pediatric Academic Societies.

The etiologic agent for pityriasis rosea, an acute inflammatory skin disease common in children and adolescents, is unknown. A study published in 2000 reported complete resolution of symptoms in 73% of patients treated with erythromycin (J. Am. Acad. Dermatol. 2000;42:241-4).

Dr. Ahdi Amer and Dr. Howard Fischer, of the Wayne State University, Detroit, treated 49 children an average of 1.5 weeks after a diagnosis of pityriasis rosea. The children, aged 2-18 years, were randomly assigned to get a 5-day course of azithromycin or placebo, the researchers said at the meeting, sponsored by the American Pediatric Society, the Society for Pediatric Research, the Ambulatory Pediatric Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Fifteen patients in the azithromycin group (60%) and 10 in the placebo group (42%) had complete resolution of symptoms within 2 weeks. Seven patients in each group had partial resolution. There were three treatment failures in the azithromycin group and seven in the placebo group. These differences weren't statistically significant. ■

Cat Exposure Ups Infant Eczema Risk

BY JANE SALODOF MACNEIL
Southwest Bureau

SAN DIEGO — Newborns who come home to a family cat may be at greater risk of developing eczema by their first birthday, according to an ongoing, prospective birth cohort study presented at the International Conference of the American Thoracic Society.

Dr. Esmeralda Morales reported 28% of 134 infants with household cats developed eczema by 1 year of age. The skin condition appeared in only 18% of 286 infants raised without cats. The difference was statistically significant with an odds ratio of 1.75 that early exposure to cats would lead to eczema. The effect was stronger for babies whose mothers did not have asthma.

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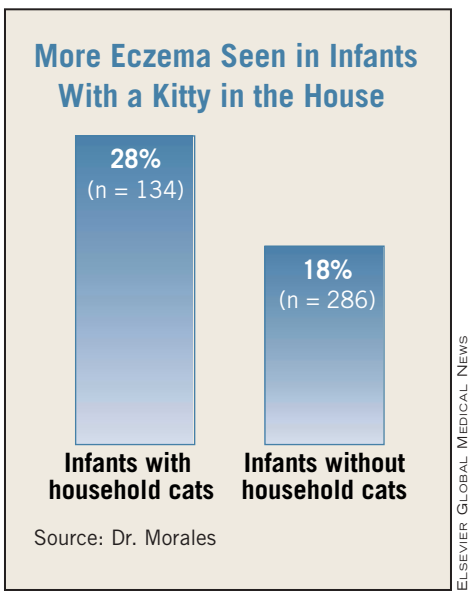
DR. MORALES

Dr. Morales, of the University of Arizona in Tucson, said the finding was a surprise to the researchers. They had hypothesized that early pet exposure would be associated with less risk of wheeze, eczema, and rhinitis apart from colds.

Dogs fared better in the analysis from the Infant Immune Study. More families had dogs: 341 had fewer than two indoor dogs, and 80 had two or more.

Infants exposed to two or more indoor dogs from birth were significantly less likely to develop wheeze by age 1 year (OR 0.53). If the family kept any dog indoors, the risk of rhinitis at 1 year also was significantly less (OR 0.50). There was no significant effect of indoor dog ownership on eczema.

The investigators plan to do a longitudinal analysis to determine whether the infants that develop eczema also are more likely to develop allergic conditions such as asthma and hay fever. ■



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