

P.E.A.R.L.S. Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations



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% of patients experience moderate to severe itch, but most people recover within 2 to 12 weeks.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Chuh AAT, Dofitas BL, Comisel GG, Reveiz L, Sharma V, Garner SE, Chu F. Interventions for pityriasis rosea. <i>Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews</i> 2007, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD005068. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD005068.pub2.. This review contains 3 small trials and 148 participants.
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NNT = numbers needed to treat to benefit one person

NNH = numbers needed to harm one person

Both NNT and NNH are only reported if the studies or pooling of studies is statistically significant

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