

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



Oral tetracyclines are effective for acne vulgaris

Clinical Question	What oral tetracycline should I prescribe for acne vulgaris?
Bottom Line	Oral tetracyclines are effective in the treatment of moderate to severe acne vulgaris eg Doxycycline, lymecycline and Oxytetracycline. Minocycline is no more effective than the others but is more expensive and is associated with safety concerns.
Context	Acne vulgaris is the commonest skin disease of adolescence, affecting over 80% of teenagers (aged 13-18 years) at some point. ² Depending on its severity there are a variety of topical and systemic treatments, including oral tetracyclines.
Caveat	Minocycline, like other tetracyclines can cause candidiasis, gastrointestinal upset, hypersensitivity reactions, photosensitivity and benign intracranial hypertension. It is more likely than other tetracyclines to produce a lupus-like syndrome, and, unlike the others, can cause a potentially irreversible slate-grey hyperpigmentation of the skin. There are other effective oral and topical treatments for acne
Reference	Garner SE et al, Minocycline for acne vulgaris: efficacy and safety. Cochrane Reviews, 2006, Issue 4. 2. Chu TC. Medicine 1997;25:30-33. This review contains 27 trials with sizes ranging from 34 participants to 300.
Date (Author)	January 2007 (B McAovy).

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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