Topical Cream Reduces Cellulite

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SAN DIEGO — Application of Spa MD Anti-Cellulite Cream effectively reduced cellulite of the thighs in 59% of patients who received the cream without occlusion and in 65% of patients who received it with occlusion, results from a small trial suggest.

The combination of topical agent plus occlusion intended to enhance penetration “offers a valuable treatment option for a condition that has few effective therapeutic choices,” Jaggi Rao, M.D., said in a poster session at the joint annual meeting of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery and the American College of Mohs Micrographic Surgery and Cutaneous Oncology. Dr. Rao also said that the success of the results seen in this trial serves to confirm the theory that microcirculatory and lymphatic impairment causes cellulite development.

More than half (65%) of the participants had a decrease in thigh circumference after 4 weeks. Average decrease in circumference was 1.2 cm.

Available since 2003, Spa MD Anti-Cellulite Cream (La Jolla Spa MD, La Jolla, Calif.) contains the following active ingredients, which are thought to stimulate lymphatic and microvascular flow: black pepper seed extract, sweet orange peel, ginger root extract, green tea extract, cinnamon bark extract, capsicum annuum resin, and caffeine (which is also thought to promote lipolysis of adipose tissue).

For the study, Dr. Rao and his associates enrolled 17 women aged 20-63 years with moderate to severe cellulite on the thighs and buttocks. They took digital photos of the posterior and lateral thighs with tangential lighting from the Verilux Happy Lite system. They also took baseline photos of each leg at 90 degrees, 45 degrees, and 180 degrees, and measured each leg’s thigh circumference with a flexible measuring tape.

All study participants were fitted with bioceramic-coated neoprene shorts. Each pair of shorts was randomized to have either the right or left leg removed so as not to provide occlusion to the control leg. Each patient received two 60-g tubes of the product and was instructed to apply the cream to the posterior and lateral thighs with tangential lighting from the Verilux Happy Lite system. They also took baseline photos of each leg at 90 degrees, 45 degrees, and 180 degrees, and measured each leg’s thigh circumference with a flexible measuring tape.

After 4 weeks, they underwent repeat photography and thigh measurements and completed self-evaluation surveys. Four blinded, independent dermatologists reviewed all photographs.

Dr. Rao reported that more than half (65%) of the participants had a decrease in thigh circumference after 4 weeks. The average decrease in thigh circumference was 1.2 cm. In addition, the physician evaluators observed that 65% of the occluded legs had improvement in cellulite, compared with 59% of the nonoccluded legs, said Dr. Rao, chief of dermatology at the University of Alberta, Edmonton.

In the self-report part of the study, 76% noticed an “overall improvement” in cellulite; 54% who noticed improvement in cellulite reported a greater improvement on the leg occluded with shorts, and 46% noticed the same amount of improvement in cellulite regardless of occlusion.

Dr. Rao concluded that the study results help increase the understanding of cellulite formation, which affects about 85% of women over age 20. “It is certain that with this and further studies to evaluate cellulite formation and maintenance, new modalities will continue to evolve,” he said.

La Jolla Spa MD provided the cream and supported the study.

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