Young Breast Ca Patients at Higher Risk of Distress

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Boston — The psychosocial needs of young breast cancer patients should be viewed in a different context than those of older women, said Lida Schapira, M.D.

"Premenopausal women with breast cancer are at greater risk of psychological distress at diagnosis and during treatment, especially when it coincides with childbearing years or with years spent in active parenting roles," Dr. Schapira said at a breast cancer meeting sponsored by Harvard Medical School.

Because younger women face such concerns as premature death and the impact that treatment will have on fertility, child rearing, career, finances, and appearance, clinicians must broaden their traditional focus on medical management of the disease process. Voluntary reports of adverse events associated with the use of ZOVIRAX Ointment 5% has included:

- Edema and/or pain at the application site.
- General: Fever, malaise, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and chills.
- Skin: Rash, pruritus, erythema, urticaria, erythematous rash, pruritus ani, blisters, stinging, burning, and dermatitis.
- Local: Burning, pain, erythema, and itching.

In the controlled clinical trials, mild pain (including transient burning and stinging) was reported by about 30% of patients, and severe pain was reported by 5% due to the minimal exposures of acyclovir that result in the full prescribing information for ZOVIRAX Ointment 5%.

"It is not known whether topically applied acyclovir is secreted in breast milk. Systemic exposure following topical administration is minimal. After oral administration of ZOVIRAX Ointment 5%, acyclovir concentrations have been documented in breast milk in 2 women and ranged from 0.6 to 4.1 times the corresponding plasma levels. These concentrations would potentially expose the nursing infant to a dose of acyclovir up to 0.5 mg/kg per day. Nursing mothers who have active herpetic lesions near or on the breast should avoid nursing.

ZOVIRAX Ointment 5% is unlikely because of limited transcutaneous absorption.

OVERDOSAGE

No reports of toxicity have been reported for acyclovir after topical administration.