Over-the-Counter Head Lice Treatment Revealed

BY MARY ELLEN SCHNEIDER
Senior Writer

A

n over-the-counter skin cleanser may have potential in treating head lice, according to a recent disclosure from a California dermatologist. Dr. Dale L. Pearlman of Menlo Park, Calif., announced in December that the dry-on suffocation pediculicide (DSP) lotion he used in a study published in Pediatrics in 2004 was in fact the over-the-counter cleanser Cetaphil, marketed by Galderma Laboratories (Pediatrics 2004;114:e275-9).

Dr. Pearlman made the announcement in a letter to the editor of Pediatrics that was published in December 2005. In the letter, he said that he was making the disclosure so that physicians could try the treatment on their own (Pediatrics 2005;116:1612).

“I have received [more than] 250 requests from health care practitioners from the United States and abroad who want independent information about this treatment; however, no pharmaceutical company, university, or health care entity has stepped forward to perform such studies,” Dr. Pearlman wrote in the letter. Dr. Pearlman’s protocol called for parents to apply the lotion and wait 2 minutes, then comb out as much lotion as possible.

Next, the protocol called for the child’s hair to be thoroughly dried with a hand-held hair dryer. The lotion is washed out with the child’s regular shampoo in 8 hours or more.

The study was a preliminary proof of concept trial, Dr. Pearlman said in an interview, and he never meant for the public at large to be using the Cetaphil cleanser for the treatment of head lice.

Instead, Dr. Pearlman had hoped that a pharmaceutical company would sign on to study the idea and possibly make improvements to the formula that would allow for quick drying and include a fluorescent tag to allow for independent confirmation that a child had been treated.

As you know, even the most effective insulin preparations are of little value if your patients become noncompliant. That’s why we remain steadfast in our commitment to developing therapeutic solutions that will improve glycemic control while helping to keep the weight off your patients’ bodies—and off their minds. At Novo Nordisk, we’re changing the shape of things to come.

References: