

Topical Diclofenac Helpful in Knee Osteoarthritis

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By David Douglas

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) Mar 23 - Pennsaid (Nuvo Research) a new topical diclofenac solution helps reduce pain and other symptoms in patients with osteoarthritis (OA), according to pooled results of randomized trials. Side effects are minor.

"Pennsaid is an effective topical NSAID in patients with OA of the knee," study author Dr. Tanveer E. Towheed told Reuters Health.

In the March issue of the Journal of Rheumatology, Dr. Towheed, of Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario notes that he conducted a review of randomized controlled trials of the agent.

In all, 3 published reports and one published abstract of trials, initially involving a total of more than 1400 patients, were analyzed. Study duration ranged from 4 to 12 weeks.

Pennsaid did significantly better than placebo in measures of pain, stiffness and physical function as well as in patient global assessment.

In comparison with vehicle control placebo, Pennsaid was more likely to cause minor skin dryness at the site of application.

However, in the one study that compared Pennsaid with oral diclofenac rather than placebo, Pennsaid was equally effective, but "much better tolerated." For example, it was considerably less likely to produce adverse gastrointestinal outcomes.

The results may not be applicable to other topical NSAIDS, Dr. Towheed concluded, but given these findings, "Pennsaid deserves further consideration when the existing treatment guidelines for OA of the knee are updated."

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