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Efficacy of superficial topical cryotherapy with liquid nitrogen in alopecia areata

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The study was conducted to determine the efficacy of cryotherapy in alopecia areata. The subjects of the study were 40 patients from the plains of north India in Dermatology department of tertiary care hospital from October 2010 to 2012 having minimum 2 patches of alopecia areata.

Methods and Material: Cryocan for liquid nitrogen with withdrawal apparatus and cotton tipped applicator was used. The autoclaved cotton tipped applicator dipped in liquid nitrogen was applied on involved area and repeated to complete two freeze thaw cycles. At the control site distilled water was applied similarly. The procedure was repeated weekly for four weeks.

Statistical analysis used: P value was calculated by Chi square chart which showed to be highly significant in test

group as compared to control group that is $<.001$.

Results: After 12 weeks out of forty patients 25 had complete hair growth, ten had 75% growth, one each had 50% and 25% hair growth while three patients had no growth at all.

Conclusion: Cryotherapy should be the preferred treatment as it can be used on all body parts except eyes. Extensive and large patches can be treated without significant side effects. Even small children are comfortable with it and in pregnant women other types of treatment may not be possible.

Key message: Cryotherapy should be the preferred treatment for alopecia areata as it is safe and effective mode of therapy.

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