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Effect of Brazilian Propolis-containing Ointment on Genital Itching in Menopausal Women

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Abstract

Introduction: Menopausal women can develop genital pruritus due to skin contraction and drying associated with estrogen deficiency. The causes of pruritus include contact dermatitis, fungal dermatitis, dry dermatitis, and others. A definite cause often cannot be identified. Propolis has reported antibacterial, antifungal, and antipruritic effects, and can inhibit histamine release. Accordingly, application of a propolis-containing agent to the genital region in menopausal women may treat many causes of pruritus.
Methods: Postmenopausal women with genital pruritus were randomly divided into 3 treatment groups: Group A (n=9) was treated with a 1% Brazilian propolis-containing ointment, Group B (n=6) with an antihistamine-containing ointment, and Group C (control, n=5) with a Vaseline ointment. Each group applied ointment to the vulva twice a day. After 14 days, improvement in pruritus was quantified with the visual analog scale (VAS). The study protocol was approved by the ethics committee of Akita University.
Results: The average VAS score was 4.7 for Group A, 3.0 for Group B, and 9.5 for Group C. There was a significant difference between Group C and the other 2 groups.
Conclusion: The 1% Brazilian propolis-containing ointment may be not as effective as the antihistamine ointment, but did have some antipruritic effect.

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