Section: DVL

Original Research Article

COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF TOPICAL AMOROLFINE, LULICONAZOLE, SERTACONAZOLE, AND TERBINAFINE IN THE TREATMENT OF TINEA CORPORIS AND TINEA CRURIS

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Received *: 09/03/2024*
Received in revised form *: 14/05/2024*
Accepted *: 29/05/2024*

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DOI: 10.5530/ijmedph.2024.2.194

Source of Support: Nil,
Conflict of Interest: None declared

Int J Med Pub Health
2024; 14 (2); 1005-1010

ABSTRACT

Background: Aim: The aim of this study was to compare the effectiveness of topical amorolfine, luliconazole, sertaconazole, and terbinafine in treating tinea corporis and tinea cruris.

Material and Methods: This prospective, comparative, observational study enrolled 120 adult patients with clinically and mycologically confirmed tinea corporis and tinea cruris. Patients were randomized into four groups of 30 each: Group A received amorolfine 0.25% cream once daily, Group B received luliconazole 1% cream once daily, Group C received sertaconazole 2% cream twice daily, and Group D received terbinafine 1% cream once daily. Treatment lasted for four weeks. Baseline demographic and clinical data were collected, and clinical assessments were performed at baseline, week 2, and week 4. Mycological cure was determined using potassium hydroxide (KOH) microscopy. Adverse events were monitored throughout the study. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25.0, with statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$.

Results: The demographic characteristics and baseline lesion severity were similar across the four groups. At week 4, complete clinical cure rates were 80.00% for amorolfine, 86.67% for luliconazole, 83.33% for sertaconazole, and 90.00% for terbinafine, with no significant differences ($p = 0.62$). Mycological cure rates were highest in the luliconazole (90.00%) and terbinafine (86.67%) groups, though differences were not statistically significant ($p = 0.48$). Adverse events were mild and included local irritation, redness, and allergic reactions, with no significant differences among the groups (p-values ranging from 0.72 to 0.90).

Conclusion: All four antifungal agents demonstrated high clinical and mycological cure rates, with Terbinafine and Luliconazole showing slightly better outcomes. The treatments were well tolerated, with minimal adverse effects. These results support the use of these antifungal creams as effective and safe options for managing tinea corporis and tinea cruris.

Keywords: tinea corporis, tinea cruris, antifungal treatment, topical therapy, clinical efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

Tinea corporis and tinea cruris are among the most common superficial fungal infections, affecting millions of individuals worldwide. These dermatophytic infections, commonly referred to as "ringworm of the body" and "jock itch," respectively, are caused by various species of dermatophytes, with Trichophyton rubrum and Trichophyton mentagrophytes being the most frequently implicated pathogens. These infections are not only highly contagious but can also lead to significant discomfort and impaired quality of life, especially if left untreated or inadequately managed. Clinically, tinea corporis and tinea cruris present as erythematous, scaly lesions with active borders,

which may be pruritic or painful, leading patients to seek medical attention for relief. Given their prevalence and potential to disrupt daily activities, effective treatment options are crucial for patient well-being and for preventing further spread of the infection.[1] Topical antifungal agents have emerged as the cornerstone of treatment for localized tinea infections, offering targeted therapy with a relatively low risk of systemic side effects. The current landscape of topical antifungals includes a variety of agents, each with unique mechanisms of action and varying degrees of efficacy. Amorolfine, luliconazole, sertaconazole, and terbinafine are four widely used topical antifungal medications that have gained prominence for their effectiveness in treating dermatophytic infections like tinea corporis and tinea cruris. Understanding the pharmacological profiles and clinical outcomes associated with these agents is essential for making informed decisions in the management of superficial fungal infections.[2] Amorolfine is a morpholine derivative that functions by inhibiting the synthesis of ergosterol, an essential component of the fungal cell membrane. By disrupting ergosterol production, amorolfine compromises the integrity of the fungal cell membrane, ultimately leading to cell death. It is typically applied once a week for nail infections but is also formulated for daily use in skin infections. Amorolfine has demonstrated good efficacy in eradicating dermatophytes and is generally well tolerated, making it a popular choice among healthcare providers. Luliconazole, a more recent addition to the antifungal arsenal, is a broad-spectrum imidazole antifungal agent. Its mechanism of action involves the inhibition of fungal lanosterol 14α-demethylase, an enzyme crucial for ergosterol synthesis. Luliconazole is known for its potent fungicidal activity, even at low concentrations, and its ability to achieve high tissue penetration. This agent has the advantage of requiring once-daily application, which can improve patient adherence and treatment outcomes. Clinical studies have highlighted luliconazole's rapid onset of action and high cure rates, making it a preferred option for many dermatologists.[3] Sertaconazole, another imidazole derivative, not only exhibits antifungal properties but also possesses anti-inflammatory and anti-itch effects, which can provide additional symptom relief for patients experiencing pruritus. Like other imidazoles, sertaconazole works by inhibiting ergosterol synthesis, leading to increased fungal cell membrane permeability and cell death. It is usually applied twice daily and has been shown to be effective in a variety of fungal infections. Its additional anti-inflammatory properties make it particularly beneficial in cases where inflammation and itching are prominent features of the infection. Terbinafine, a well-established allylamine antifungal agent, works by inhibiting squalene epoxidase, another enzyme essential for ergosterol synthesis. This inhibition leads to an accumulation of squalene within the fungal cell, resulting in cell death. Terbinafine is known for its fungicidal activity against dermatophytes and is often the first-line treatment for various tinea infections. It is applied once daily and is generally associated with high cure rates and minimal side effects, making it a reliable and effective choice for the management of superficial fungal infections.[4] The comparative effectiveness of these four topical antifungal agents in treating tinea corporis and tinea cruris remains an area of active research. While each agent has demonstrated success in clinical practice, variations in cure rates, onset of symptom relief, and side effect profiles necessitate a head-to-head evaluation to determine the most effective treatment option. Factors such as the severity and extent of the infection, patient adherence, and the presence of underlying conditions may also influence treatment outcomes. Therefore, understanding the relative strengths and limitations of these agents is crucial for optimizing patient care and achieving favorable clinical and mycological outcomes.[5] The rising incidence of dermatophytic infections and the emergence of antifungal resistance underscore the importance of effective and well-tolerated treatment regimens. With the increasing prevalence of tinea infections in both community and healthcare settings, there is a pressing need for robust clinical data comparing these antifungal agents. This study aims to fill this gap by evaluating and comparing the clinical and mycological cure rates of amorolfine, luliconazole, sertaconazole, and terbinafine in patients with tinea corporis and tinea cruris. Additionally, the study will assess the safety profiles and adverse effects associated with each agent, providing a comprehensive understanding of their effectiveness and suitability in real-world clinical scenarios. By doing so, it seeks to inform clinical practice and guide the selection of topical antifungal agents, ultimately improving patient outcomes and reducing the burden of superficial fungal infections.[6]

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This prospective, comparative, observational study was conducted to evaluate and compare the effectiveness of four topical antifungal agents—amorolfine, luliconazole, sertaconazole, and terbinafine—in the treatment of tinea corporis and tinea cruris. A total of 120 adult patients with clinically and mycologically confirmed cases of tinea corporis and tinea cruris were enrolled in the study. Approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee, and informed written consent was secured from all participants. Inclusion criteria comprised adult patients aged 18 to 65 years presenting with clinical signs and symptoms consistent with tinea corporis or tinea cruris, confirmed through potassium hydroxide (KOH) microscopy. Patients who were immunocompromised, pregnant, lactating, or had a

known hypersensitivity to any of the study drugs were excluded. Those who had used any systemic or topical antifungal treatment within four weeks prior to enrollment were also excluded.

Methodology

Participants were randomly assigned into four groups (30 patients per group) using a computer-generated randomization method:

- **Group A**: Treated with amorolfine 0.25% cream applied once daily
- **Group B**: Treated with luliconazole 1% cream applied once daily
- **Group C**: Treated with sertaconazole 2% cream applied twice daily
- **Group D**: Treated with terbinafine 1% cream applied once daily

Each participant was instructed to apply the assigned cream to the affected area, extending at least 2 cm beyond the lesion margins, for a period of four weeks. Patients were advised to maintain good hygiene and refrain from using any other topical or systemic antifungal medications during the study period.

Clinical Assessment and Data Collection

Baseline demographic and clinical data were collected, including age, gender, duration of symptoms, and lesion characteristics. Clinical assessments were performed at baseline, week 2, and week 4 to evaluate the extent of lesion clearance and symptom improvement. Lesions were graded based on erythema, scaling, and pruritus, using a four-point scale ranging from 0 (absent) to 3 (severe).

Mycological Assessment

Mycological cure was assessed at week 4 by repeating KOH microscopy. A negative KOH result was indicative of mycological cure.

Primary and Secondary Outcomes

- **Primary Outcome**: The primary outcome was the percentage of patients achieving complete clinical and mycological cure at week 4.
- **Secondary Outcomes**: Secondary outcomes included the rate of symptom relief, time to initial symptom improvement, and the safety and tolerability of each antifungal agent.

Safety Monitoring Adverse events, if any, were recorded and monitored throughout the study. Patients were instructed to report any side effects, such as local irritation, redness, or allergic reactions, immediately.

Follow-Up and Compliance Patient compliance was assessed at each follow-up visit by interviewing the participants and checking for any missed applications. Compliance was reinforced during each visit, and non-compliance was documented. Patients who failed to adhere to the treatment protocol were excluded from the final analysis.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS software version 25.0. Continuous variables, such as age and duration of symptoms, were expressed as mean ± standard deviation (SD). Categorical variables, such as gender and clinical cure rates, were presented as frequencies and percentages. The chi-square test was used to compare categorical data, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for continuous data. A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Study Population The demographic characteristics across the four treatment groups were well balanced, with no statistically significant differences noted. The average age of participants ranged from 35.6 ± 9.8 years in the Terbinafine group to 37.1 ± 12.3 years in the Sertaconazole group, with a p-value of 0.82, indicating no significant variation in age distribution among the groups. The gender distribution was relatively uniform as well, with males comprising 60.00% in the Amorolfine group and 63.33% in the Terbinafine group, while the Luliconazole and Sertaconazole groups had slightly lower proportions of male participants at 53.33% and 56.67%, respectively (p = 0.88). The duration of symptoms also did not show any significant differences among the groups, with approximately 33.33% to 43.33% of patients having symptoms for less than six months, 30.00% to 40.00% with symptoms between six and twelve months, and 23.33% to 30.00% with symptoms persisting for more than a year (p-values ranging from 0.75 to 0.90). These similarities suggest that the baseline characteristics of the study population were comparable across all groups, minimizing the risk of confounding factors affecting the outcomes.

Table 2: Lesion Severity at Baseline The severity of lesions, assessed based on erythema, scaling, and pruritus, was also similar across the four treatment groups. The mean erythema scores ranged from 2.4 ± 0.6 in the Sertaconazole group to 2.6 ± 0.4 in the Luliconazole group, with a p-value of 0.65, indicating no significant difference in erythema severity at baseline. Scaling scores varied slightly, with means between 2.2 ± 0.6 in the Terbinafine group and 2.3 ± 0.5 in the Sertaconazole group, resulting in a p-value of 0.72. Pruritus severity was relatively consistent, with scores between 2.5 ± 0.4 in the Terbinafine group and 2.6 ± 0.5 in both the Amorolfine and Sertaconazole groups (p = 0.78). The uniformity in baseline lesion severity confirms that all treatment groups started with similar clinical presentations.

Table 3: Clinical Cure Rates at Week 4 By the end of the four-week treatment period, all groups showed substantial rates of complete clinical cure, though the differences were not statistically significant (p = 0.62). The Terbinafine group had the highest complete cure rate at 90.00% (27 patients), followed by the Luliconazole group at 86.67% (26 patients), the Sertaconazole group at

83.33% (25 patients), and the Amorolfine group at 80.00% (24 patients). Partial cure rates were relatively low, with 16.67% of patients in the Amorolfine group showing partial improvement compared to only 6.67% in the Terbinafine group (p = 0.58). All groups had one patient each (3.33%) with no response to treatment, indicating that while the majority of patients experienced significant clinical improvement, there was a consistent minority who did not respond to any of the treatments (p = 1.00).

Table 4: Mycological Cure Rates at Week 4 Mycological cure, assessed through KOH microscopy, showed a higher percentage of negative KOH results in the Luliconazole group (90.00%, or 27 patients) and the Terbinafine group (86.67%, or 26 patients) compared to the Amorolfine group (76.67%, or 23 patients) and the Sertaconazole group (83.33%, or 25 patients), but these differences were not statistically significant (p = 0.48). Positive KOH results, indicating persistent fungal infection, were observed in 23.33% of the Amorolfine group and only 10.00% of the Luliconazole group (p = 0.55), suggesting some variation in the effectiveness of the treatments in achieving complete mycological clearance.

Table 5: Adverse Events Reported The safety profile of each antifungal agent was evaluated by documenting adverse events such as local irritation, redness, and allergic reactions. Local irritation was reported by 10.00% (3 patients) in the Amorolfine group and 13.33% (4 patients) in the Sertaconazole group, compared to 6.67% (2 patients) in both the Luliconazole and Terbinafine groups (p = 0.72). Redness was most commonly reported in the Luliconazole group (10.00%, or 3 patients) and least common in the Sertaconazole group (3.33%, or 1 patient), with a p-value of 0.80. Allergic reactions were infrequent, occurring in only one to two patients per group, with no statistically significant differences observed (p = 0.90). Overall, the adverse events were mild and manageable, and no severe reactions were reported, indicating that all four antifungal agents were well tolerated by the patients.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Study Population

Characteristic	Amorolfine Group (n=30)	Luliconazole Group (n=30)	Sertaconazole Group (n=30)	Terbinafine Group (n=30)	p-value
Age (mean ± SD)	35.8 ± 10.2	36.4 ± 11.5	37.1 ± 12.3	35.6 ± 9.8	0.82
Gender (Male/Female)	18/12 (60.00%/40.00%)	16/14 (53.33%/46.67%)	17/13 (56.67%/43.33%)	19/11 (63.33%/36.67%)	0.88
Duration of Symptoms					
< 6 months	12 (40.00%)	11 (36.67%)	13 (43.33%)	10 (33.33%)	0.75
6-12 months	10 (33.33%)	12 (40.00%)	9 (30.00%)	11 (36.67%)	0.84
> 12 months	8 (26.67%)	7 (23.33%)	8 (26.67%)	9 (30.00%)	0.90

Table 2: Lesion Severity at Baseline

Severity Score	Amorolfine Group (n=30)	Luliconazole Group (n=30)	Sertaconazole Group (n=30)	Terbinafine Group (n=30)	p-value
Erythema (0-3)	2.5 ± 0.5	2.6 ± 0.4	2.4 ± 0.6	2.5 ± 0.5	0.65
Scaling (0-3)	2.3 ± 0.6	2.2 ± 0.7	2.3 ± 0.5	2.2 ± 0.6	0.72
Pruritus (0-3)	2.6 ± 0.5	2.5 ± 0.6	2.6 ± 0.5	2.5 ± 0.4	0.78

Table 3: Clinical Cure Rates at Week 4

Outcome	Amorolfine Group (n=30)	Luliconazole Group (n=30)	Sertaconazole Group (n=30)	Terbinafine Group (n=30)	p-value
Complete Cure (%)	24 (80.00%)	26 (86.67%)	25 (83.33%)	27 (90.00%)	0.62
Partial Cure (%)	5 (16.67%)	3 (10.00%)	4 (13.33%)	2 (6.67%)	0.58
No Response (%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)	1.00

Table 4: Mycological Cure Rates at Week 4

Outcome	Amorolfine Group (n=30)	Luliconazole Group (n=30)	Sertaconazole Group (n=30)	Terbinafine Group (n=30)	p-value
Negative KOH (%)	23 (76.67%)	27 (90.00%)	25 (83.33%)	26 (86.67%)	0.48
Positive KOH (%)	7 (23.33%)	3 (10.00%)	5 (16.67%)	4 (13.33%)	0.55

Table 5: Adverse Events Reported

Adverse Event	Amorolfine Group (n=30)	Luliconazole Group (n=30)	Sertaconazole Group (n=30)	Terbinafine Group (n=30)	p-value
Local Irritation (%)	3 (10.00%)	2 (6.67%)	4 (13.33%)	2 (6.67%)	0.72
Redness (%)	2 (6.67%)	3 (10.00%)	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.67%)	0.80
Allergic Reaction (%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.67%)	1 (3.33%)	0.90

DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics of the study population were well matched across all four groups, reducing the risk of confounding and ensuring that any observed differences in treatment outcomes were likely due to the effectiveness of the

antifungal agents. The mean age range of 35.6 to 37.1 years aligns with previous research by Gupta et al. (2018), who found that tinea infections are common in adults aged 30-40 years.[8] The gender distribution, with a higher proportion of males (53.33% to 63.33%), is also consistent with findings from Singh et al. (2019), who reported a male predominance in dermatophytic infections, potentially due to increased occupational exposure and hygiene practices.[9]

The severity of lesions at baseline, assessed by erythema, scaling, and pruritus scores, showed no significant differences among groups. This uniformity in lesion severity is similar to observations by Kumar et al. (2020), who noted comparable baseline characteristics when comparing different topical antifungal treatments. Such consistency ensures that the initial disease burden was evenly distributed, providing a fair comparison of the antifungal agents.[10]

The clinical cure rates observed at week 4 were high across all groups, with Terbinafine showing the highest complete cure rate at 90.00%. Luliconazole also demonstrated a strong performance, with an 86.67% complete cure rate. These findings are supported by Desai et al. (2018), who found Terbinafine to be highly effective, with clinical cure rates exceeding 85% in similar patient populations.[11] However, the difference in cure rates among the groups was not statistically significant ($p=0.62$), indicating that all four antifungal agents were comparably effective in achieving clinical resolution of tinea corporis and tinea cruris. The partial cure rates and non-response rates were low and consistent across groups, echoing results from Sharma et al. (2017), who reported that modern topical antifungals generally have a high success rate in treating superficial dermatophytoses.[12]

The mycological cure rates, determined by KOH microscopy, further highlighted the efficacy of Luliconazole and Terbinafine, with negative KOH results in 90.00% and 86.67% of patients, respectively. This outcome is consistent with the work of Patel et al. (2019), who observed similar mycological cure rates with these agents, emphasizing their effectiveness in eradicating fungal pathogens.[13] The Amorolfine group had a lower mycological cure rate (76.67%), which, while still substantial, suggests a slight inferiority compared to Luliconazole and Terbinafine. The p-value of 0.48 indicates that the differences in mycological cure rates were not statistically significant, aligning with findings from Mehta et al. (2021), who found that various topical antifungals can have overlapping efficacy profiles depending on the severity and duration of infection.[14]

The adverse events reported in the study were mild and manageable, with no significant differences between the groups (p-values ranging from 0.72 to 0.90). Local irritation and redness were the most commonly reported side effects, occurring in 6.67% to 13.33% of patients. These rates are comparable to those reported by Verma et al. (2018), who found a similar incidence of mild adverse reactions with topical antifungals. The low occurrence of allergic reactions across all groups indicates a favorable safety profile for these agents, supporting their continued use in clinical practice. The overall tolerability of the treatments is consistent with the literature, which emphasizes the safety and efficacy of modern topical antifungal therapies for superficial fungal infections.[15]

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrated that all four topical antifungal agents—amorolfine, luliconazole, sertaconazole, and terbinafine—were effective in treating tinea corporis and tinea cruris, with high clinical and mycological cure rates. Terbinafine and luliconazole showed slightly higher cure rates, but the differences were not statistically significant. All treatments were well tolerated, with minimal and manageable adverse events. These findings highlight the efficacy and safety of these antifungal agents, providing valuable guidance for clinicians in selecting appropriate treatments based on patient preference and clinical considerations.

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