

The Use of Glyceryl Tri-Nitrate Ointment in Treatment of Chronic Fissure in Ano

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Background: Chronic anal fissure is a common painful condition. It is traditionally treated by anal dilatation or by lateral sphincterotomy. However, both of these surgical treatments may cause a degree of incontinence in 35 - 45% of patients. Several recent trials have shown that glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) can reduce sphincter pressure and heal up to 70% of chronic fissures.

Objective: Assessment of the efficacy of topical 0.2% glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) ointment in the treatment of chronic anal fissure.

Design: Prospective uncontrolled clinical study.

Setting: Surgical polyclinic, Bahrain.

Method: Fifty-four patients were diagnosed as having chronic anal fissure and treated with 0.2% GTN ointment during the period from June 2002 to August 2005. They were reviewed at 1, 2, 6-8 and up to 12 weeks to assess symptoms, fissure healing, compliance, duration of symptoms free period after finishing or stopping the course of treatment.

Result: At six-eight weeks, the GTN course was completed or taken for longer duration in 34 patients (62.9%). The course was stopped before 6-8 weeks in 20 patients (37%). Pain was completely relieved in 25 /34 patients (73.5%) and partially relieved in 5/34 patients (14.7%), bleeding was absent in 32/34 patients (94%), anal tone became normal in 32/34 patients (94%), and 28/34 patients (82.4%) had either healing or healed fissures.

Twenty patients stopped GTN course before 6 weeks due to different causes, such as, side effects mainly headache (60 %), non compliance (95%), or no response at all (50%). Recurrence of symptoms in the first six months was seen in 26 patients. There was a highly significant positive relationship between duration of treatment and recurrence of symptoms. The recurrence was treated surgically in 14 patients, traditional ointments in 8 patients, and repeated GTN course in 4 patients.

Conclusion: The use of 0.2% GTN induces rapid healing of chronic anal fissures with an 82.4% healing rate in this study. Successful treatment may come at the expense of high incidence of headache although it is lower in our study due to low GTN concentration.

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