Thêta-Cream versus Bepanthol lotion in breast cancer patients under radiotherapy. A new prophylactic agent in skin care?

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE: In radiotherapy of the breast following breast-conserving surgery, the adverse reaction predominantly found is confined to the skin. After phase II studies, Thêta-Cream, containing CM Glucan, Hydroxyprolisilan C und Matrixyl as active substances, was said to have prophylactic properties of preventing acute radiation side effects in skin tissue. In a prospective randomized study, Thêta-cream was compared with standard skin care using Bepanthol lotion. PATIENTS AND METHODS: 20 breast cancer patients were randomly assigned to use Thêta-Cream or Bepanthol lotion during radiotherapy. At 0, 30, and 50 Gy, acute skin toxicity was scored with a modified RTOG scoring system. The patients' content with the skin care and the technical assistants' content with the skin marks were recorded. RESULTS: For single aspects of toxicity and their sums in defined skin areas, no differences in median and range between study groups were found. The maximal toxicity anywhere in the breast averaged in a moderate erythema, mild elevation of skin temperature, no desquamation in both groups. Mild itchiness and sporadic efflorescences were more frequently seen with Thêta-Cream. According to a ranking of anonymized breast photos at 50 Gy by independent investigators, side effects were equal. Patients' content was high with both skin care regimens (1.25 on a scale from 0 to 10). With Thêta-Cream a
trend toward worse skin marks was noted. Adverse events exclusively occurred in Thêta-Cream users: suspected allergic reaction once, and the necessity for resimulation twice. CONCLUSION: In direct comparison with dexpantenol-containing lotion, no advantage for Thêta-Cream was found. Higher costs and problems with skin marks prevent a general recommendation.