

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3126/njdv.v17i1.23116>

Topical Corticosteroids Misuse: A Burning Issue

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Abstract

Since the introduction of hydrocortisone into dermatology, a tremendous development has occurred in the field of topical corticosteroids. With the growing use of topical corticosteroids, a serious concern for its misuse is to be highlighted. This matter is of a great concern. Proper guidelines and legislation on the use of topical corticosteroids are warranted to combat this serious issue.

Key words: Glucocorticoids; Hydrocortisone; Nepal; Nonprescription drugs

The history of use of topical corticosteroid into dermatology started from Hydrocortisone which was initially named as "compound F" in 1952.¹ Since then, there has been a tremendous development in the field of topical corticosteroids and today we have different classes of topical corticosteroids in our dermatological therapeutic armamentarium. Topical corticosteroids have been used in dermatological practices for various uses such as anti-inflammatory, anti-pruritic, or other actions.

With its growing use, a serious concern for misuse is to be highlighted and addressed. Even in Western country where few milder topical corticosteroids are available as over the counter drugs, corticosteroids' misuse has posed serious problems.² Topical corticosteroids can result in both local as well as systemic adverse effects.

Misuse of topical corticosteroid is of a great concern in the Indian subcontinent including Nepal.^{3,4,5} Studies have shown that the most common cause of misuse is its use for fairness purpose.^{3,5} Hence, proper guidelines and strict legislation on the use of topical corticosteroids, limitation on the over the counter availability; mandating a prescription preferably by dermatologists will definitely help to combat this serious issue.

Financial support: None.

Conflict of interest to disclosure: None declared.

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Submitted: 1st February 2019

Accepted: 7th February 2019

Published: 31st March 2019

How to cite this article

Topical corticosteroids misuse: A burning issue. Neupane S. *Nepal Journal of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology.* 2019;17(1):1. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3126/njdv.v17i1.23116>



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