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1 **Clinical outcomes and response to treatment of patients receiving topical treatments for**  
2 **pyoderma gangrenosum: a prospective cohort study**

3 Running Head: Pyoderma gangrenosum: a prospective cohort study

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52 the study as planned (and, if relevant, registered) have been explained.

53

54

### 55 **Capsule summary (50 words max)**

56

- **What is already known on this topic**

57

Pyoderma gangrenosum is a painful ulcerating disease. The current evidence base for treatment is very limited.

58

59

60

- **What this article adds to our knowledge**

61

This prospective cohort study of topical therapies included 66 participants and is the largest study to date.

62

63

64

- **How this info impacts clinical practice**

65

Topical therapies appear effective for patients with mild disease, but not all patients respond and recurrence is common.

66

67

68 **Abstract**

69 Background: pyoderma gangrenosum (PG) is an uncommon dermatosis with a limited evidence base for  
70 treatment.

71 Objective: to estimate the effectiveness of topical therapies in the treatment of PG.

72 Methods: prospective cohort study of UK secondary care patients with a clinical diagnosis of PG suitable for  
73 topical treatment (recruited July 2009 to June 2012). Participants received topical therapy following normal  
74 clinical practice (mainly Class I-III topical corticosteroids, tacrolimus 0.03% or 0.1%). Primary outcome: speed  
75 of healing at 6 weeks. Secondary outcomes: proportion healed by 6 months; time to healing; global  
76 assessment; inflammation; pain; quality-of-life; treatment failure and recurrence.

77 Results: Sixty-six patients (22 to 85 years) were enrolled. Clobetasol propionate 0.05% was the most commonly  
78 prescribed therapy. Overall, 28/66 (43.8%) of ulcers healed by 6 months. Median time-to-healing was 145 days  
79 (95% CI: 96 days,  $\infty$ ). Initial ulcer size was a significant predictor of time-to-healing (hazard ratio 0.94 (0.88;  
80 1.00);  $p = 0.043$ ). Four patients (15%) had a recurrence.

81 Limitations: No randomised comparator

82 Conclusion: Topical therapy is potentially an effective first-line treatment for PG that avoids possible side-  
83 effects associated with systemic therapy. It remains unclear whether more severe disease will respond  
84 adequately to topical therapy alone.

85

86 **Key words:** pyoderma gangrenosum, topical therapy, corticosteroid, tacrolimus, side-effects, cohort

87

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 88 | <b>Abbreviations</b>                             |
| 89 | <b>Pyoderma Gangrenosum (PG)</b>                 |
| 90 | <b>Randomised controlled trial (RCT)</b>         |
| 91 | <b>EuroQol 5 Dimensions, 3 Levels (EQ-5D-3L)</b> |
| 92 | <b>Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI)</b>     |
| 93 | <b>Tumour Necrosis Factor (TNF)</b>              |
| 94 |  |

## 95 **Introduction**

96 Pyoderma Gangrenosum (PG) is an uncommon, painful ulcerative inflammatory dermatosis that is associated  
97 with considerable morbidity<sup>1, 2</sup> and a reported three-fold increased risk of death<sup>3</sup>.

98 The most commonly prescribed treatments for PG are systemic therapies (e.g. prednisolone, ciclosporin,  
99 intravenous immunoglobulin or biologic therapies). Nevertheless, topical treatments (e.g. corticosteroids and  
100 calcineurin inhibitors) have also been recommended for localised disease<sup>4, 5</sup> and may be a useful first-line  
101 therapy for some patients.

102 We conducted a multi-centre prospective cohort study to investigate the efficacy of topical therapy as a first-  
103 line treatment for PG. This cohort study was conducted alongside a randomised controlled trial (RCT) of systemic  
104 treatments for PG (STOP GAP Trial), in which oral prednisolone was compared to ciclosporin.<sup>6</sup>

105 Our objective was to provide prospectively collected estimates of treatment response for patients receiving  
106 topical therapy for their PG.

## 107 **Methods**

108 Ethics and regulatory approvals were obtained; participants gave written informed consent. Independent Trial  
109 Steering Committee and Data Monitoring Committees provided oversight.

## 110 **Study design**

111 Prospective cohort study of patients with a clinical diagnosis of PG, for whom topical therapy was indicated.  
112 Patients with more severe PG (requiring systemic therapy) were enrolled into the parallel RCT<sup>6</sup> but were eligible  
113 for inclusion in the topical therapy cohort study if systemic therapy was contra-indicated, or if patient preference  
114 was to receive topical treatment.

115 Participants were enrolled for up to 6 months, or until the target PG ulcer had healed. Medications were  
116 prescribed as per local practice at the recruiting hospital.

## 117 **Research questions**

- 118 1. What is the typical treatment response in patients for whom topical therapy is indicated?
- 119 2. What proportion of participants require escalation of treatment to systemic medication?
- 120 3. What is the impact of PG on patient-reported quality of life?

121 4. What factors predict treatment response?

122 **Participants**

123 Recruitment took place in 28 secondary care hospitals throughout the UK. Participants were identified from  
124 dermatology, rheumatology, gastroenterology and general medicine clinics.

125 Participants were aged 18 years or older and had a clinical diagnosis of PG (confirmed by the recruiting  
126 dermatologist, with biopsy to exclude alternative aetiologies if clinically indicated), and at least one measureable  
127 ulcer. The decision over whether to treat with topical therapy or not was based on the views of the dermatologist  
128 in discussion with patients.

129 Patients were excluded if they had pustular or granulomatous PG variants (as they may respond differently to  
130 therapy and measurement of a single ulcer was not possible); if they had received oral prednisolone, ciclosporin  
131 or intravenous immunoglobulin for the treatment of PG in the previous month, or were participating in another  
132 clinical trial.

133 Ongoing treatment with systemic therapies for the management of underlying co-morbidities (e.g. rheumatoid  
134 arthritis) was permitted.

135 **Interventions**

136 Patients received topically applied interventions for the treatment of PG. The dermatologist was free to  
137 prescribe whichever therapy and dosage regimen they preferred according to local practice. In the UK, normal  
138 practice would be to apply topical interventions to the inflammatory edge of the ulcer. Systemic therapies for  
139 the treatment of PG were prohibited, but were continued if taken for other conditions.

140 **Assessments and outcomes**

141 Study visits took place at 2 weeks, 6 weeks and 6 months (or at time of healing if sooner). Other unscheduled  
142 consultations took place as per normal practice.

143 A target lesion was used for outcome assessment. Lesion size was captured by the treating dermatologist based  
144 on maximal longitudinal length and maximum perpendicular length, converted to area by the formula (length x  
145 width x 0.785), which approximates an ellipse.

146 *Outcomes:* i) speed of healing at 6 weeks (primary outcome in-line with RCT primary outcome); ii) proportion  
147 healed by 6 months; iii) time to healing; iv) global assessment of improvement at 6 weeks and final visit; v)  
148 inflammation assessment at 6 weeks and final visit<sup>7</sup>; vi) pain in the first 6 weeks (scored daily 0 to 4); vii)  
149 quality-of-life (EuroQol 5 Dimensions, 3 Levels – EQ-5D-3L<sup>8</sup> & Dermatology Life Quality Index - DLQI<sup>9</sup>).

150 Healing was defined as the point at which dressings were no longer required. This was reported by the  
151 participants, and a clinic visit was arranged to confirm healing as soon as possible thereafter. In cases where the  
152 date on which dressings were stopped was unavailable, healing was assumed to have taken place on the day  
153 that the ulcer was confirmed as healed by the recruiting dermatologist. Pain scores and use of dressings were  
154 collected using daily diaries.

#### 155 **Measures taken to control bias**

156 This was an open study, with no control group. In order to mitigate the risk of bias, consecutive participants  
157 were enrolled into the study and followed up prospectively. Outcomes were assessed using standard methods  
158 and clinicians' and patients' views were compared where appropriate. Every effort was made to maintain follow-  
159 up of all participants.

#### 160 **Sample size**

161 This was a pragmatic cohort study. No formal sample size calculation was performed, as this was a descriptive  
162 study without formal between-treatment comparisons.

#### 163 **Statistical analysis**

164 The primary analysis included all participants who received at least one topical medication and had available  
165 data at both the baseline and the 6 week visit. Pre-defined sub-groups were i) participants who received  
166 clobetasol propionate 0.05%, and ii) participants who received a topical calcineurin inhibitor (tacrolimus or  
167 pimecrolimus).

168 Data are presented descriptively and data relating to participants of the STOP GAP RCT are included alongside  
169 those of the topical therapy cohort, but no formal comparisons have been made.



170 If a participant received more than one topical medication, they were included in all relevant study populations.  
171 Participants who withdrew due to lack of treatment response, or who started a systemic medication during the  
172 period of the study were classed as treatment failures for the topical medication.

173 Exploratory analyses adjusting for lesion size at baseline, presence of underlying autoimmune disease, age,  
174 weight, sex and size of recruiting centre were conducted to determine possible factors associated with  
175 treatment response. Linear regression models were used for continuous outcomes, logistic regression for binary  
176 outcomes and cox proportional hazards for time to event outcomes.

## 177 **Results**

### 178 **Participants and treatment allocation**

179 Recruitment took place between July 2009 and June 2012.

180 In total, 67 participants were enrolled in the study, but one was subsequently excluded from the analysis  
181 having received oral prednisolone for PG (Figure 1).

182 Forty-nine (74.2%) participants received clobetasol propionate 0.05% (Dermovate™, GlaxoSmithKline); 10  
183 (15.2%) received tacrolimus 0.03% or 0.1% (Protopic®; Astellas Pharma); and eight received other topical  
184 interventions including other topical corticosteroids (n=6), fludroxycortide impregnated tape (Haelan® Tape,  
185 Typharm) (n=1), and lymecycline (Tetralysal® 300, Galderma) (n=1). One participant received both clobetasol  
186 propionate and tacrolimus and was therefore included in both sub-groups. Five participants in the clobetasol  
187 propionate group were taking concurrent anti-inflammatory/immune modifying medications for the treatment  
188 of other conditions including azathioprine (n = 2), tetracyclines (n = 2) and anti-TNF (n = 1).

189 The reason for choosing systemic or topical therapy (and therefore eligibility for the cohort study or the RCT),  
190 were: topical treatment failure - for those opting for systemic therapy (n=47); features of the disease (n=43);  
191 and patient's preference (n=6).

192 Details of demographic and baseline characteristics are summarised (Table 1: Baseline characteristics of  
193 participants in STOP GAP RCT and topical therapies cohort study

194 Table 2: Treatment response (RCT participants and observational cohort)

195 **List of Figures**

196 Figure 1: Participant flow

197 Figure 2: Kaplan-Meier plot of time to healing

198 Figure 3: Global treatment response at final visit (clinician assessed)

199 Figure 4: Global treatment response at final visit (patient assessed)

200

201 ). The majority of participants were identified through dermatology services (47; 71.2%); others were  
202 identified from gastroenterology (7; 10.6%), rheumatology (1; 1.5%), general medicine (2.0; 3%) and other  
203 sources (9; 13.6%).

204 Baseline characteristics for participants in the cohort study were broadly similar to those enrolled in the  
205 parallel RCT, with the exception that the mean lesion size was smaller (4.7cm<sup>2</sup> versus 9cm<sup>2</sup>), the mean number  
206 of ulcers was lower (1.6 versus 2.4), and fewer participants had had PG previously (18% versus 31%) (Table 1).

207 **Adherence to medication**

208 Only 12/66 (18.2%) participants provided data on adherence to their prescribed treatments at the end of the  
209 study. Nevertheless, the levels of treatment response achieved would suggest that the participants were using  
210 their medications broadly as prescribed. Nine participants in the clobetasol propionate group used systemic  
211 medication for comorbidities during the study (azathioprine n=2; anti-TNF n=1; tetracyclines n=2).

212 **Treatment response**

213 Details of the clinical outcomes are summarised (Table 2).

214 Mean speed of healing was -0.1 cm<sup>2</sup> per day (SD 0.3). This is approximately half that observed in the RCT patients  
215 receiving systemic therapy, but the method of assessment was different for the two studies (physical  
216 measurements by clinician versus planimetry from digital images), and so direct comparison is difficult. The  
217 mean change from baseline in area of the lesion at the final visit was -4.2 (SD 11.5)cm<sup>2</sup>, with similar changes  
218 reported in the clobetasol and tacrolimus sub-groups (-4.0 (SD 11.9) and -3.9 (SD 6.0), respectively).

219 Overall, 28 (43.8%) participants healed on topical therapy alone within the 6-month study period. Twenty two  
220 (33.3%) required systemic therapy, and of these 13 (59.1%) went on to be enrolled into the RCT (Figure 1). For  
221 those that entered the RCT, 8 (61.5%) healed by 6 months, with 3 of the 13 (23.1%) healing by 6 weeks.

222 Ulcers healed in a median duration of 145 days (95% CI: 96 days,  $\infty$ ) (Table 2, Figure 2). Cox proportional hazards  
223 model suggested that size of initial lesion was an important predictive factor in determining time to healing (HR  
224 0.94 (95% CI: 0.88, 1.00);  $p = 0.043$ ). Presence of underlying autoimmune disease was not predictive (HR 0.90  
225 (95% CI: 0.41, 1.95);  $p = 0.786$ ).

226 Global disease severity, as reported by clinicians and patients, is summarised (Figure 3, Figure 4). Self-reported  
227 pain gradually reduced during the first 6 weeks of treatment, and quality of life scores improved for both disease  
228 specific (DLQI) and general health status (EQ-5D-3L) questionnaires (Table 2). No covariates were predictive of  
229 scores at final visit for any of these outcomes, other than baseline scores for DLQI and EQ-5D VAS (DLQI estimate  
230  $-0.47$  (95% CI  $-0.77, -0.17$ );  $p = 0.003$ . EQ-5D VAS estimate  $-0.40$  (95% CI:  $-0.65, -0.15$ );  $p = 0.003$ ).

### 231 **Recurrence**

232 Of the 28 participants whose ulcer had healed, 27 had recurrence data available (minimum follow-up from  
233 time of healing 5.5 months; maximum follow-up 37.2 months). Overall 4/27 (14.8%) participants had a  
234 recurrence subsequent to their initial episode.

### 235 **Discussion**

#### 236 **Main findings**

237 This prospective cohort study of patients receiving topical therapy for the treatment of PG suggests that many  
238 patients with limited PG can be managed effectively with topical therapy alone. For almost half of the  
239 participants, healing was achieved within the 6-month study window and most of these had healed within 2  
240 months. This is similar to the proportions healed in the STOP GAP RCT, where again roughly half of the ulcers  
241 had healed by 6 months. Care should be taken when comparing healing rates between the RCT and the cohort  
242 study as participants in the RCT had more severe disease, as demonstrated by the increased number of ulcers,  
243 larger ulcer size at baseline, and greater impact on quality of life. Of those who failed to heal on topical therapy,  
244 one third subsequently received systemic therapy; suggesting that not all patients can be adequately treated  
245 with topical therapy alone.

246 The most important predictor of time to healing was size of the ulcer at presentation. This is consistent with  
247 previous findings<sup>10</sup>.

248 Given the increased mortality risk for patients with PG compared to patients with inflammatory bowel disease  
249 and apparently healthy individuals,<sup>3</sup> it is important to evaluate the role of topical therapies for the management  
250 of PG. Similar concerns about increased mortality and morbidity in bullous pemphigoid patients (that could be  
251 partly due to systemic therapies such as prednisolone), led to an RCT by Joly *et al.* who found that mortality was  
252 reduced in those treated with potent topical steroids compared to those receiving systemic steroids.<sup>11</sup>

253 The potential impact of PG on patients' quality of life is high. Baseline EQ-5D-3L scores of 0.59 (cohort study)  
254 and 0.48 (RCT) are comparable to patients with mild to severe heart failure; where EQ-5D-3L scores of 0.78 (SD  
255 0.18) to 0.51 (SD 0.21) respectively have been reported.<sup>12</sup>

256 One of the objectives of this study was to maintain contact with potential trial participants in order to improve  
257 recruitment into the RCT. In this regard, the cohort study was extremely effective, and resulted in an additional  
258 13/121 (11%) patients being enrolled into the RCT. For trials of rare conditions, where the evidence base is  
259 limited, the added complexities and expense of running a parallel study of this kind can often be warranted.<sup>13</sup>

#### 260 **Strengths and limitations**

261 This multi-centre study is much larger than any of the previously published prospective cohort studies of PG  
262 patients.<sup>4, 5, 14</sup> Clinicians prescribed topical medication in line with local practice, but treatment allocations were  
263 not randomised. As a result, it is not possible to make formal comparison of different topical treatments such as  
264 corticosteroids versus tacrolimus. Data on sub-groups of patients are presented for interest, but should be  
265 interpreted cautiously. Tacrolimus may be an effective treatment for PG, but further evaluation in comparison  
266 to topical corticosteroids is required. Very little is known about the natural history of PG if left untreated. In the  
267 absence of placebo control arm, it is not possible to say whether or not the lesions would have healed without  
268 intervention, although clinical experience would suggest that this is unlikely.

#### 269 **Generalisability**

270 This was a pragmatic study that reflected current practice. For an uncommon condition such as PG it was  
271 necessary to recruit across many hospitals, which aids the generalisability of the results. Nevertheless, this cohort  
272 of patients was recruited alongside an RCT of systemic treatments for PG and this may have impacted on the

273 type of patients agreeing to take part. Patients with more severe disease were randomised into the RCT and  
274 those with milder or more localised disease entered the cohort study.

### 275 **Clinical conclusions**

276 Mild PG may be controlled effectively using topical agents without incurring the side-effects associated with  
277 systemic treatments. The importance of ulcer size on presentation in determining treatment response, and the  
278 relatively high recurrence rates are findings that will assist clinicians in optimising the management of PG, and  
279 in managing patients' expectations with regards to the potential effectiveness of treatments.

280

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282 The UK Dermatology Clinical Trials Network's STOP GAP Trials team consisted of:

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Table 1: Baseline characteristics of participants in STOP GAP RCT and topical therapies cohort study

|  |                              | RCT             | Cohort study    | Cohort sub-groups          |                  |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------|
|  |                              | n= 112          | n = 66          | clobetasol propionate n=49 | tacrolimus n= 10 |
| <b>Demographics</b>                          |                              |                 |                 |                            |                  |
| <b>Age: years Mean (SD)</b>                  |                              | 54.4 (16.3)     | 57.3 (17.3)     | 57.5 (17.9)                | 53.0 (13.0)      |
| <b>Sex: n (%)</b>                            | Female                       | 73 (65.2)       | 44 (66.7)       | 34 (69.4)                  | 6 (60.0)         |
| <b>Ethnicity: n (%)</b>                      | White                        | 108 (96.4)      | 64 (97.0)       | 47 (95.9)                  | 10 (100.0)       |
| <b>Weight: kg Mean (SD)</b>                  |                              | 90.7 (25.8)     | 80.4 (20.3)     | 77.8 (17.2)                | 86.2 (29.7)      |
| <b>Medical History</b>                       |                              |                 |                 |                            |                  |
| <b>Underlying co-morbidities: n (%)</b>      | Crohn's Disease              | 8 (7.1)         | 6 (9.1)         | 2 (4.1)                    | 2 (20.0)         |
|  | Ulcerative colitis           | 15 (13.4)       | 8 (12.1)        | 7 (14.3)                   | 1 (10.0)         |
|  | Rheumatoid arthritis         | 8 (7.1)         | 2 (3.0)         | 2 (4.1)                    | 0 (0.0)          |
|  | Other inflammatory arthritis | 6 (5.4)         | 5 (7.6)         | 3 (6.1)                    | 2 (20.0)         |
|  | Monoclonal gammopathy        | 0 (0.0)         | 1 (1.5)         | 1 (2.0)                    | 0 (0.0)          |
|  | Myeloma                      | 0 (0.0)         | 1 (1.5)         | 1 (2.0)                    | 0 (0.0)          |
|  | Haematological malignancy    | 0 (0.0)         | 1 (1.5)         | 1 (2.0)                    | 0 (0.0)          |
|  | Other malignancy             | 4 (3.6)         | 6 (9.1)         | 5 (10.2)                   | 0 (0.0)          |
|  | Diabetes                     | 13 (11.6)       | 7 (10.6)        | 5 (10.2)                   | 2 (20.0)         |
|  | Renal impairment             | 2 (1.8)         | 3 (4.5)         | 2 (4.1)                    | 0 (0.0)          |
|  | Epilepsy                     | 1 (0.9)         | 1 (1.5)         | 1 (2.0)                    | 0 (0.0)          |
| <b>Characteristics of PG</b>                 |                              |                 |                 |                            |                  |
| <b>Type of PG: n (%)</b>                     | Classical                    | 97 (86.6)       | 55 (83.3)       | 43 (87.8)                  | 9 (90.0)         |
|  | Cribriform                   | 6 (5.4)         | 1 (1.5)         | 0 (0.0)                    | 0 (0.0)          |
|  | Peristomal                   | 4 (3.6)         | 6 (9.1)         | 3 (6.1)                    | 1 (10.0)         |
|  | Bullous                      | 1 (0.9)         | 2 (3.0)         | 2 (4.1)                    | 0 (0.0)          |
|  | Unsure                       | 4 (3.6)         | 2 (3.0)         | 1 (2.0)                    | 0 (0.0)          |
| <b>Previous episode of PG:</b>               | Yes n (%)                    | 31 (27.7)       | 18 (27.3)       | 12 (24.5)                  | 3 (30.0)         |
| <b>Area of target lesion: cm<sup>2</sup></b> | n                            | 112             | 65              | 48                         | 10               |
|  | Median (Q1; Q3)              | 9.0 (3.2, 24.4) | 4.7 (2.4; 11.0) | 4.4 (1.6; 10.5)            | 6.8 [2.8, 11.0]  |
| <b>Location of lesion: n (%)</b>             | Upper limb                   | 3 (2.7)         | 7 (10.6)        | 6 (12.2)                   | 0 (0.0)          |
|  | Lower limb                   | 75 (67.0)       | 39 (59.1)       | 29 (59.2)                  | 6 (60.0)         |
|  | Other                        | 34 (30.4)       | 20 (30.3)       | 14 (28.6)                  | 4 (40.0)         |
| <b>Number of lesions</b>                     |                              | n=110           | n = 65          | (n = 48)                   | (n=10)           |
|  | Mean (SD)                    | 2.4 (2.1)       | 1.6 (1.2)       | 1.6 (1.1)                  | 1.8 (1.1)        |
| n  |                              | 112             | 66              | 49                         | 10               |
| <b>Erythema n (%)</b>                        | None                         | 6 (5.4)         | 0 (0.0)         | 0 (0.0)                    | 0 (0.0)          |
|  | Slight                       | 5 (4.5)         | 9 (13.6)        | 10 (20.4)                  | 1 (10.0)         |
|  | Moderate                     | 36 (32.1)       | 10 (15.2)       | 15 (30.6)                  | 8 (80.0)         |
|  | Severe                       | 39 (34.8)       | 32 (48.5)       | 16 (32.7)                  | 1 (10.0)         |
|  | Very Severe                  | 26 (23.2)       | 15 (22.7)       | 8 (16.3)                   | 0 (0.0)          |
| n=   |                              | 112             | 65              | 49                         | 10               |
| <b>Border Elevation n (%)</b>                | None                         | 5 (4.5)         | 14 (21.5)       | 6 (12.2)                   | 0 (0.0)          |
|  | Slight                       | 53 (47.3)       | 23 (35.4)       | 24 (49.0)                  | 1 (10.0)         |

|                          |             |           |           |           |          |
|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
|                          | Moderate    | 36 (32.1) | 23 (35.4) | 17 (34.7) | 8 (80.0) |
|                          | Severe      | 13 (11.6) | 4 (6.2)   | 1 (2.0)   | 1 (10.0) |
|                          | Very Severe | 5 (4.5)   | 1 (1.5)   | 1 (2.0)   | 0 (0.0)  |
| <b>Exudate<br/>n (%)</b> | n=          | 112       | 66        | 49        | 10       |
|                          | None        | 4 (3.6)   | 8 (12.1)  | 9 (18.4)  | 0 (0.0)  |
|                          | Slight      | 16 (14.3) | 13 (19.7) | 12 (24.5) | 1 (10.0) |
|                          | Moderate    | 59 (52.7) | 27 (40.9) | 22 (44.9) | 8 (80.0) |
|                          | Severe      | 15 (13.4) | 11 (16.7) | 4 (8.2)   | 1 (10.0) |
|                          | Very Severe | 18 (16.1) | 7 (10.6)  | 2 (4.1)   | 0 (0.0)  |

Table 2: Treatment response (RCT participants and cohort participants)

|  | RCT participants<br>n=112 | All cohort participants<br>n = 66 | Sub-groups<br>clobetasol propionate<br>n=49 | tacrolimus<br>n= 10 |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>Speed of healing</b>  | n= 108                    | n = 54                            | n = 37                                      | n = 10              |
| Mean (SD) cm <sup>2</sup> /day   | -0.2 (0.8)                | -0.1 (0.3)                        | -0.1 (0.2)                                  | -0.1 (0.1)          |
| <b>% healed by final visit<br/>(up to 6 months)</b>  | n=112                     | n=64                              | n=47  | n= 10               |
| n (%)  | 53 (47.3)                 | 28 (43.8)                         | 20 (42.6)                                   | 5 (50.0)            |
| <b>Time to healing (days)</b>  | n=112                     | n=64                              | n=47  | n= 10               |
| Median (95% CI)  | 169 days (113; ∞)         | 145 days (96; ∞)                  | 136 days (46; ∞)                            | 161 days (13; ∞)    |
| <b>Area of lesion: cm<sup>2</sup>*</b>   | n = 108                   | n=55                              | n=38  | n= 10               |
| Baseline: median (Q1; Q3)  | 9.0 (3.2; 24.8)           | 5.9 (1.8; 13.6)                   | 6.4 (1.6; 14.0)                             | 6.8 (2.8; 11.0)     |
| Final visit: median (Q1; Q3)   | 0.0 (0.0; 8.1)            | 0.0 (0.0; 9.0)                    | 0.0 (0.0; 9.0)                              | 1.2 (0.0; 3.5)      |
| Mean change from baseline at final visit (SD)  | -9.1 (51.1)               | -4.2 (11.5)                       | -4.0 (11.9)                                 | -3.9 (6.0)          |
| Median change (Q1; Q3)   | -5.0 (-15.8; -1.5)        | -3.4 (-8.7; -0.3)                 | -1.7 (-7.4; -0.2)                           | -3.3 (-8.5; -0.3)   |
| <b>Resolution of inflammation<sup>#</sup></b>  | n=107                     | n=54                              | n=49  | n= 10               |
| 6 weeks: n (%)   | 11 (10.3)                 | 8 (14.8)                          | 6 (16.2)                                    | 0 (0.0)             |
|  | n= 108                    | n=55                              | n=38  | n=10                |
| Final visit: n (%)   | 20 (18.5)                 | 12 (21.8)                         | 10 (26.3)                                   | 1 (10.0)            |
| <b>AUC for weekly pain in 1<sup>st</sup> six weeks (range 0 to 20);<br/>high score = worse</b> | n=77                      | n=37                              | n=24  | n= 7                |
| Mean (SD)  | 7.6 (5.2)                 | 5.4 (5.2)                         | 5.6 (5.2)                                   | 7.3 (6.3)           |
| <b>DLQI (range 0 to 30); high score = worse</b>  | n = 111                   | n=66                              | n=49  | n= 10               |
| Baseline: mean (SD)  | 11.7 (8.2)                | 8.4 (6.0)                         | 8.5 (6.0)                                   | 8.8 (4.6)           |
|  | n = 66                    | n=49                              | n=32  | n= 10               |
| Final visit: mean (SD)   | 5.5 (7.2)                 | 6.2 (6.8)                         | 7.6 (7.5)                                   | 4.6 (5.4)           |
| <b>EQ-5D* (range 0 to 1); high score = better</b>  | n=108                     | n= 66                             | n= 49                                       | n= 10               |
| Baseline: mean (SD)  | 0.48 (0.4)                | 0.59 (0.3)                        | 0.60 (0.3)                                  | 0.51 (0.3)          |
|  | n = 69                    | n= 51                             | n= 34                                       | n= 10               |
| Final visit: mean (SD)   | 0.71 (0.4)                | 0.69 (0.3)                        | 0.65 (0.3)                                  | 0.73 (0.3)          |
| <b>EQ-5D VAS (range 0 to 100); high score = better</b>   | n =110                    | n= 66                             | n= 49                                       | n= 10               |

|   |             |             |             |             |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Baseline: mean (SD)   | 62.0 (21.8) | 67.0 (20.4) | 65.6 (21.9) | 64.4 (15.9) |
| :   | n = 70      | n= 50       | n= 33       | n= 10       |
| Final visit: mean (SD)  | 72.1 (21.2) | 73.6 (20.5) | 69.3 (22.2) | 78.2 (13.1) |
| <b>Recurrence (in those who had healed by 6 months)<sup>§</sup></b> | n=52        | n=27        | n=19        | n= 5        |
| n (%)   | 15 (28.8)   | 4 (14.8)    | 4 (21.1)    | 0 (0.0)     |

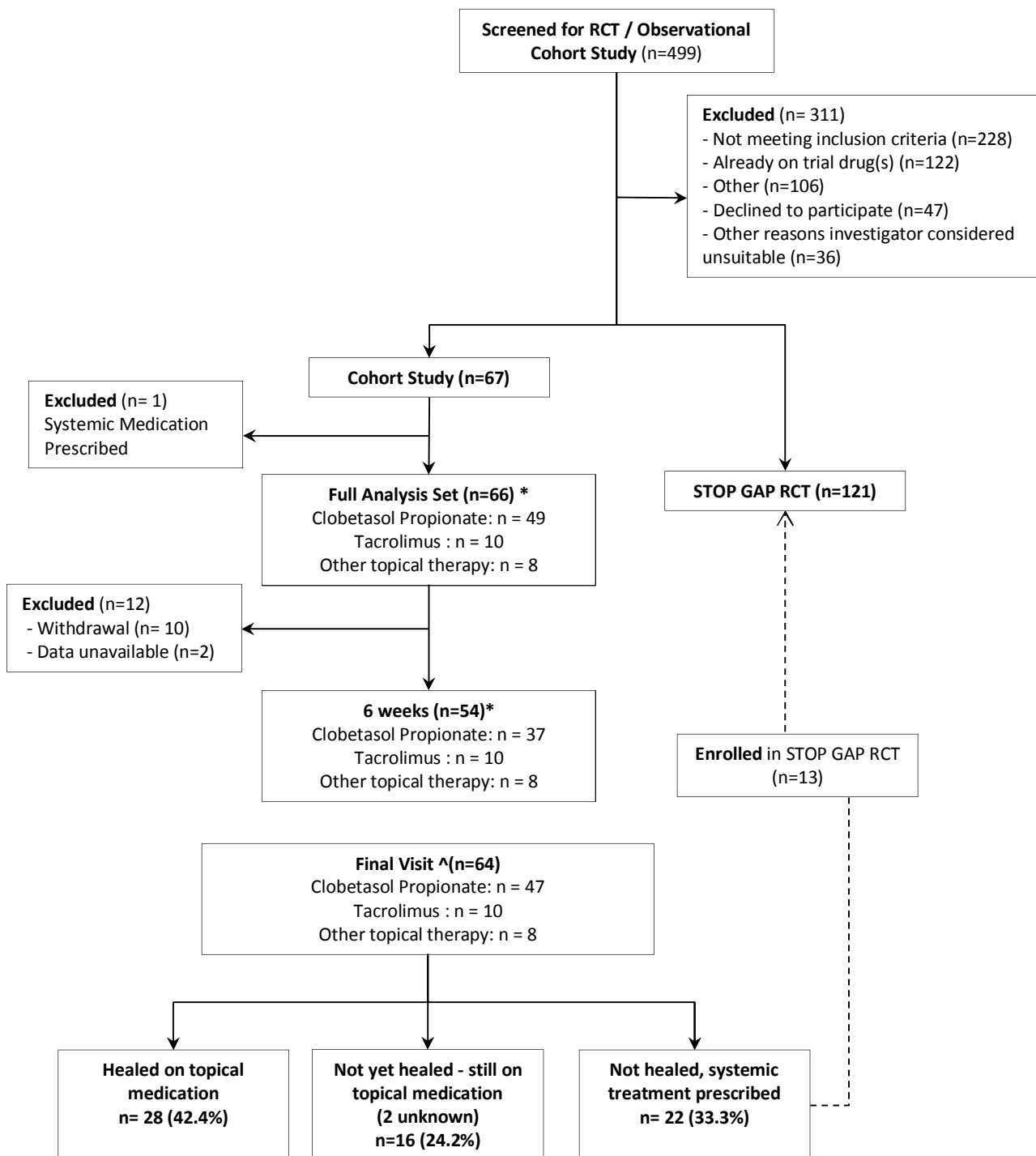
# Assessed by clinician, resolution of inflammation defined as erythema and border elevation reduced to “none” – as per Foss <sup>7</sup>. § Minimum follow-up after healing: RCT (0 to 40.3 months); cohort (5.5 months to 37.2), depending on when recruited. \* Captures health utility based on responses (0 to 2) for mobility, self-care, usual activities, pain/discomfort, anxiety/depression.

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Figure 1: Participant flow observational study



• Could be receiving more than one treatment

^ Number of patients who had information on whether the lesion had healed at any point during the study up to 6 months after randomisation (main Secondary outcome of time to healing)



