Histone deacetylase inhibitors preferentially augment transient transgene expression in human dermal fibroblasts

Low efficiency of gene transfection has been a major problem in gene therapy. Histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitors have been reported to increase transgene expression in malignant cells. Yasukawa et al. report that HDAC inhibitors (FK228, cyclic hydroxamic acid-containing peptide 31 and trichostatin A) more effectively increased transient transgene expression in normal human dermal fibroblast cells than in normal human epidermal keratinocyte cells, HaCaT cells or stratified cultured epidermal sheets. Nevertheless, HDAC inhibitors could not satisfactorily reactivate stably integrated transgene activity. HDAC inhibitors may not prove so useful for treating genetic dermatoses, which require cells stably expressing the correct gene, but may be advantageous in treating non-healing cutaneous wounds or cancer. Br J Dermatol 2007; 157: 662–9.

Quantitative analysis of Malassezia flora in psoriasis

Malassezia species, which constitute a part of the normal skin flora, are associated with several skin diseases including psoriasis. Takahata et al. quantitatively analysed Malassezia species in the psoriatic scale by performing a real-time polymerase chain reaction assay, and demonstrated that colonization by M. restricta at various body sites was approximately five times higher than that by M. globosa. Furthermore, Malassezia colonization was significantly lower in patients with hyperlipidaemia than in those with normolipidaemia. This approach may facilitate rapid progress in understanding the possible role played by Malassezia species in the development of psoriasis. Br J Dermatol 2007; 157: 670–3.


U.K. incidence rates for work-related skin disease are determined through physician-based voluntary surveillance schemes such as EPIDEREM and OPRA within The Health and Occupation Reporting (THOR) network. THOR schemes monitor the burden of work-related dermatoses, and help to target interventions. During 2002–2005 the mean annual incidence rate of work-related skin disease per million reported by dermatologists was 91.3 (95% confidence interval 81.8–101.1), and by occupational physicians was 316.6 (251.8–381.3). Most reports were of contact dermatitis, with higher incidences found in service industries (notably hairdressers and beauticians). Br J Dermatol 2007; 157: 713–22.

What predicts severe histological dysplasia/early melanoma in excised atypical melanocytic lesions?

It is frequently difficult to distinguish clinically atypical melanocytic lesions with severe histological atypia or early melanoma from those with mild to moderate histological atypia. As lesions likely to progress or already progressing to melanoma require excision, this distinction is of great importance. Strauss et al. retrospectively analysed the clinical characteristics of excised atypical melanocytic lesions with the aim to identify what predicts severe histological atypia/melanoma in situ compared with lesions with mild to moderate histological atypia. Only older age was predictive of severe histological atypia/melanoma in situ, confirming the difficulty to differentiate clinically between benign atypical naevi and borderline lesions. Br J Dermatol 2007; 157: 758–64.