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LEVOCETIRIZINE RELIEVES SYMPTOMS OF PERENNIAL ALLERGIC RHINITIS IN CHILDREN AGED 6-12

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Background : Perennial allergic rhinitis (PAR) is difficult to treat and affects health related quality of life (HRQoL) in adults. Few data are available in children. Levocetirizine (LCTZ) is a new antihistamine approved in Europe for the treatment of PAR as from 6 yr of age. Methods : A 4 week double blind placebo (PB) controlled study was performed including, at some centers, a measurement of nasal resistance. A HRQoL assessment, using the PRQLQ (Paediatric Rhinoconjunctivitis Quality of Life Questionnaire) was performed in all children. Children, using electronic diary, and investigators gave their appreciation of the evolution of the disease. Results : 306 children (61% boys), aged 6 to 14 year (mean 9.9) were randomised. All were sensitised to house dust mite, and 47.4% were asthmatic. Over the first 2 weeks of treatment, LCTZ patients showed a relative improvement of 90.9% as compared to PB ($p=0.001$) i.e. LCTZ effect was almost twice the PB effect. This reduction remained statistically significant over the whole study duration ($p=0.008$). PRQLQ results confirmed this improvement, with LCTZ being constantly superior to PB. Rhinomanometry measurements showed an effect in nasal congestion that needs further analysis. Investigators considered that 57% of LCTZ group patients were moderately or markedly improved. No serious unexpected adverse event occurred. Conclusion : This study demonstrates the efficacy of LCTZ in 6-12 year children on symptoms score and quality of life. LCTZ is well tolerated and provides a global response to PAR symptoms in children.

