

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Outcome and recurrence in treatment of phimosis using topical betamethasone in children in Hong Kong

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Aim: To study the efficacy of treating phimosis with topical steroid, and its long-term outcome and side effects. We also looked into the effect of daily retraction and cleansing of prepuce on preventing recurrence of phimosis.

Methods: This prospective study comprised 138 boys who were prescribed 0.05% betamethasone ointment (Diprolol) during 1 August 2001–31 July 2004. Five boys were excluded because of non-compliance. Of the remaining 133 boys, 108 were followed-up and assessed. Age ranged from 0.03 to 12.9 years (mean = 3.38, SD = 2.79). The number of treatment course received, short-term and long-term outcome, side effects and the effect of daily foreskin retraction were studied.

Results: The success rate of first treatment course was 81.5%, and 60.2% of boys remained free from phimosis upon latest assessment. The follow-up period ranged from 0.4 to 4.4 years (mean = 2.45, SD = 0.90). There were no side effects noted. We found a significant and linear relationship between daily foreskin retraction and sustained resolution of phimosis.

Conclusion: Topical steroid is an effective and safe treatment for phimosis, especially when combined with a good hygiene practice of the foreskin with daily cleansing and retraction. A trial of topical steroid treatment should be offered upon considering circumcision.