

Steroid Treatment of Eosinophilic Esophagitis in Adults

Jeffrey A. Alexander, MD

KEYWORDS

- Open-label trials • Placebo-controlled trials • Comparator trials • Maintenance trials
- Issues in steroid treatment of eosinophilic esophagitis

KEY POINTS

- Currently, there is no commercially available preparation designed to deliver the steroid to the esophagus. Current regimens consist of swallowing steroid preparations designed for inhalation treatment for asthma.
- When used in proper dose, steroids lead to complete histologic responses in the range of 60% to 70% of patients and at least a partial histologic response in more than 90% of patients.
- Symptom response rates appear to be somewhat less than histologic rates, with at least a partial symptomatic response of only 60% to 75%.
- Maintenance therapy seems promising in one trial, but likely needs a higher dosage than 0.25 mg budesonide twice a day.
- In the short term, steroids are associated with about a 15% to 25% incidence of asymptomatic esophageal candidiasis, but otherwise appear to be well tolerated.

OPEN-LABELED TRIALS

The first report of topical steroid therapy in adult patients with eosinophilic esophagitis (EoE) was reported by Arora and colleagues in 2003 ([Table 1](#)).¹ In this open-labeled study, Arora and colleagues¹ treated 21 adults with esophageal eosinophilic infiltration (EEI) and dysphagia. Patients were treated with 440 µg aerosolized swallowed fluticasone twice a day and all patients had a symptomatic response of their dysphagia to the treatment as accessed by a phone interview. Histologic follow-up was not obtained in this report.

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Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Mayo Clinic School of Medicine, Mayo Clinic, 200 First Street Southwest, Rochester, MN 55905, USA

E-mail address: alexander.jeffrey14@mayo.edu

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Table 1
Open-labeled trials active treatment trials

Author	Tx	EEI/EoE	N	Duration	Symptoms		Histologic		Side Effects	Comments
					Response	Definition	Response	Definition		
Arora et al, ¹ 2003	Fluticasone 440 µg twice a day	EEI	21	6 wk	90% (19/21)	Resolution of solid food dysphagia by phone interview	Not evaluated		5% (1/21) dry mouth	First report of steroid benefit in adult patients
Remedios et al, ² 2006	Aerosolized fluticasone 500 µg twice a day	EEI	19	4 wk	5.42 pre post ($P < .001$) 100% (19/19) decreased 58% (11/19) asymptomatic	Symptom score (0–18)	Proximal 25.0 pre 4.5 post ($P < .0004$) Distal 39.3 pre 3.8 post ($P < .0001$) 21% (4/19) complete response	eos/hpf	16% (3/19) asymptomatic esophageal candidiasis	53% (10/19) abnormal esophageal pH studies

Abbreviations: EEI, eosinophil esophageal infiltration; EoE, eosinophilic esophagitis; eos, eosinophils; hpf, high power field.

Data from Arora AS, Perrault J, Smyrk TC. Topical corticosteroid treatment of dysphagia due to eosinophilic esophagitis in adults. *Mayo Clin Proc* 2003;78:830–5; and Remedios M, Campbell C, Jones DM, et al. Eosinophilic esophagitis in adults: clinical, endoscopic, histologic findings, and response to treatment with fluticasone propionate. *Gastrointest Endosc* 2006;63:3–12.

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