

INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON SPA (SALUS PER AQUAM) THERAPY IN PATIENTS WITH PLAQUE PSORIASIS

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Numerous studies have revealed that the gender influences natural history and clinical presentation of several diseases and also response to therapy with clinically relevant consequences (Eder et al., 2012). It has been recently suggested that gender could be associated to difference in the response to treatments commonly used for psoriasis (Colombo et al., 2016). The available therapeutic strategies for plaque psoriasis, the most common clinical form, include the administration of both topical and systemic conventional drugs, target therapy with biologics, phototherapy and salus per aquam (spa) treatment (Costantino et al., 2014). The role of gender in conditioning the response of psoriatic patients to spa therapy has not still clarified. On the basis of these considerations, we investigated gender differences before and after spa therapy in patients with mild to moderate plaque psoriasis. The study population was represented by 134 subjects (55% women and 45% men) with a mean age of 55 ± 14 years (age range 19-86 years) divided into 4 groups: A1 and A2, B1 and B2. The psoriatic patients of groups A (A1=47 women; A2=35 men) was subjected to spa therapy for 2 weeks in Italian spas (i.e. Telese Bath—in Telese Terme, Benevento; Nitrodi Bath—in Ischia, Naples etc.); while the subjects of groups B (B1=27 women; B2 =25 men) were on pharmacological topical treatment. Before and after treatment, gender differences in pruritus (using VAS-score), PASI index and impact on quality of life (using DLQI questionnaire) were investigated. Spa therapy induced a significant ($p < 0.01$) reduction of itching in groups A1 and A2 (-56% in women and -38% in men) and PASI-score (-51% in women and -56% in men) with an improvement of the quality of life as demonstrated by significant ($p < 0.01$) decrease of the total score DLQI (-58% in women and -34% in men). In groups B1 and B2 we observed similar results with significant reduction of itching (-32% in women and -44% in men, $p < 0.01$), PASI-score (-57% in women and -51% in men, $p < 0.01$) and total score DLQI (-36% in women and -44% in men, $p < 0.05$). The beneficial effects were in percentage greater in women treated with spa therapy and in men using topical drugs. In conclusion, the results of this pilot observational study show that spa therapy may play an important role in the management and treatment of psoriatic patients.

Eder (2012). *Int J Clin Rheumathol.* 7(6), 641-649.

Colombo (2016). *Drug Design, Development and Therapy.* 10, 2097-2027.

Costantino (2014). *Clin Ter.* 165(4): e277-284.