

The effect of a triphasic oral contraceptive containing desogestrel on seborrhea and acne

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Objective: Current data shows that 15–30% of women worldwide suffer from hyperandrogenism that may appear as oily skin (seborrhea), acne or hirsutism. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the efficacy of a triphasic oral contraceptive (OC) containing desogestrel in the treatment of women with facial seborrhea and acne.

Design & Methods: This was an open-label, non-comparative bi-center trial performed in Russia. An interim analysis was performed after 3 treatment cycles on thirty women aged 18 to 30 years, with mild to moderate acne or facial seborrhea (oily skin) and oily hair, but otherwise healthy. All women received a triphasic (OC) containing desogestrel and ethinylestradiol (Tri-Merci®, Laurina®) for 21 days, followed by a 7-day pill-free interval. Seborrhea was assessed using the Sebutape technique and acne was assessed by counting the acne lesions in the face. Subjective evaluation of the condition of the facial skin was assessed using a visual analogue scale (VAS). Assessments were performed at baseline, and after 1 and 3 treatment cycles.

Results: At baseline, most patients indicated that they felt unconfident and less attractive because of their skin problem. Significant improvements in seborrhea were already observed after 1 treatment cycle with the triphasic OC. There was also a statistically significant improvement of acne after 3 treatment cycles. No significant changes in blood pressure or body weight were found. Subjective assessment over 3 treatment cycles showed that 93% of the women were either satisfied or very satisfied with the triphasic OC.

Conclusions: Already after one treatment cycle with Tri-Merci® there is an improvement of seborrhea. There is a significant improvement of acne after 3 treatment cycles. Seborrhea and acne not only present a medical problem but also a psychological problem in affected women.