

Inhaled Corticosteroid Prophylaxis in Childhood Asthma: Efficacy, Cost Effectiveness and Successful Withdrawal

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Eighty six asthmatic children, recruited over 4 years from 1990, were randomised to either beclomethasone dipropionate or budesonide, via a MDI and spacer. Sixty seven responded excellently and 13 had a good response. Mean monthly cost before treatment was Rs 2652.33 (UK£36.33) and Rs 449.42 (UK£6.16) after starting treatment. Conclusion was that it was efficacious and cost-effective. The same cohort of patients were followed up to December 2003. After a period of stabilization, the dose of inhaled steroid was reduced and slowly tailed off. Long-term follow up was continued. The average time for withdrawal was 12.6 months. In 73 it was successfully withdrawn. They were observed for an average of 97.1 months following withdrawal. Fifty seven (78%) have remained well and 14 (19%) have had mild wheezing easily controlled by bronchodilators. It was concluded that withdrawal of inhaled steroids was possible in the majority of this cohort.