

TREATMENT OF MICROSPORUM CANIS INFECTED CATS WITH TERBINAFINE

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ABSTRACT

Terbinafine is a new allylamine antifungal agent with its primary characteristic of fungicidal action. Because of its excellent qualities this drug is interesting for use in veterinary medicine too. Among the diseases, which are common in humans and animals, we are dealing with the effective control of *Microsporum canis* infection. Humans are often infected by contact with cats. The most dangerous sources of infection are stray cats and asymptomatic carriers. Because an effective vaccine against the disease is still not available, it is important to detect infected cats and treat them. Due to excellent results in humans it is reasonable to use the terbinafine.

Our preliminary results using terbinafine in cats showed that cats tolerated terbinafine well in a dosage of 10-20 mg/kg daily for 5 months. Half of the cats got cured in 145 days, and all were cured in 159 days. It is too early to estimate the result of such treatment, but according to our clinical experience with the combination of drugs, we would expect shorter treatment periods from a fungicidal agent. It is highly probable that the dose 10-20 mg/kg in cats acts fungistatically and that higher doses should also be tried.

KEY WORDS

terbinafine, cats, *M.canis*, dermatophytes, treatment

INTRODUCTION

Microsporum canis (*M. canis*) infection in man was first recognized in Slovenia in 1977 (1) and in animals in 1984 (2). From 1986 we have been able to follow a constant increase in the number of cases and the spread of the disease all over the country (3). Important sources of infection for humans are considered household or stray cats (4). *M.canis* is

the most common cause of dermatophytosis in cats (5). It is estimated that seventy percent of humans become infected by contact with cats (1), and half of exposed individuals become infected (6). Besides the direct infection from animals, hair shafts containing infectious arthrospores may remain infectious in the environment up to 18 months (7,8). Asymptomatic carriers of *M.canis* in cats represent a very important

