

Summary

This supplement examines the unique mechanism of action and therapeutic potential of the immune response modifier, imiquimod. Imiquimod has been shown to possess both antiviral and antitumor activity *in vivo* and clinical studies have demonstrated its efficacy for the treatment of several viral and oncological conditions. Imiquimod 5% cream (Aldara™) is currently recommended as a first-line treatment option for external genital and perianal warts. Recently, double-blinded, randomized controlled trials have highlighted the potential of imiquimod for the treatment of cutaneous malignancies such as basal cell carcinoma and actinic keratosis. Imiquimod has also been successfully used in clinical practice for the treatment of a range of cutaneous viral infections, such as molluscum contagiosum; however, it is noted that further multi-center clinical trials are required to assess the safety and efficacy of imiquimod for optimal benefit of cutaneous infections. This supplement represents the proceedings from two symposia “Cutaneous oncology: research with immune response modifiers” and “Viral dermatoses: treatment and new research results with immune response modifiers” held at the World Congress of Dermatology in Paris 2002.

Key words: actinic keratosis; basal cell carcinoma; external genital warts; imiquimod; mechanism of action