

**Medication Policy Manual**

**Policy No:** dru328

**Topic:** Vasoconstrictors for Rosacea:

**Date of Origin:** January 17, 2014

- Mirvaso<sup>®</sup>, brimonidine topical gel
- Rhofade<sup>™</sup>, oxymetazoline cream

**Committee Approval Date:** January 13, 2017

**Next Review Date:** January 2018

**Effective Date:** February 1, 2017

**IMPORTANT REMINDER**

This Medication Policy has been developed through consideration of medical necessity, generally accepted standards of medical practice, and review of medical literature and government approval status.

Benefit determinations should be based in all cases on the applicable contract language. To the extent there are any conflicts between these guidelines and the contract language, the contract language will control.

The purpose of Medication Policy is to provide a guide to coverage. Medication Policy is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise their medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care.

**Description**

Brimonidine topical gel and oxymetazoline cream are topically applied vasoconstrictors that help reduce redness in patients with rosacea. They have not been shown to improve any other symptom associated with rosacea or to alter the course of the disease.

## Policy/Criteria

- I. Brimonidine topical gel and oxymetazoline cream are considered not medically necessary for rosacea.
- II. Brimonidine topical gel and oxymetazoline cream are considered investigational when used for all other conditions.

## Position Statement

- Brimonidine topical gel and oxymetazoline cream are approved to treat persistent redness associated with rosacea. They work by constricting blood vessels in the skin.
- Brimonidine topical gel and oxymetazoline cream have not been shown to improve any other symptom of rosacea (e.g. pustules, papules, flushing, etc.) or to alter the course of the disease.
- The use of brimonidine topical gel or oxymetazoline cream for treating skin redness due to any cause, including but not limited to rosacea is considered cosmetic and not medically necessary. Most benefit contracts exclude medications used for cosmetic purposes from coverage.
- For symptoms of rosacea other than redness, treatments include metronidazole and azelaic acid.

## Clinical Efficacy

- There is moderate certainty in the evidence that brimonidine topical gel improves redness associated with moderate- to severe rosacea relative to placebo.
  - \* Two short-term (4 week) and one long-term (12 month) randomized controlled trials evaluated the effect of brimonidine topical gel on erythema (redness) based on patient- and investigator assessments. [1-3]
  - \* In the short-term studies, more patients in the brimonidine topical gel treatment arm reported a 2-point reduction in redness score (based on a 5-point rating scale) than in the vehicle alone group (approximately 20% to 30% versus approximately 10%, respectively). Patients in the long-term study also reported improvement in facial redness, but the magnitude reduction in redness score was smaller (approximately 1 point reduction through month 12). [1-3]
  - \* Open-label study designs and the use of concomitant rosacea medications in a majority of subjects in the long-term trial significantly undermine the precision of the reported results.
- There is low certainty in the evidence that oxymetazoline cream improves redness associated with moderate- to severe rosacea relative to placebo.
  - \* Two unpublished short-term (4 week) randomized controlled trials and one unpublished long-term (12 month) open-label trial evaluated the effect of oxymetazoline cream on erythema (redness) based on patient- and investigator assessments. [4,5]

- \* In the short-term studies, more patients treated with oxymetazoline cream demonstrated at least a 2-point improvement in two redness assessment scales (5-point rating scales) than in the vehicle alone group (approximately 12% to 18% versus approximately 5% to 9%, respectively). Approximately 11% to 43% of patients in the long-term study also reported improvements in facial redness at 52 weeks. [4,5]
- \* There is insufficient information in the unpublished trials with oxymetazoline cream to rule out risk of bias which significantly undermines study results.
- Brimonidine gel and oxymetazoline cream have not been shown to improve any other symptom associated with rosacea (e.g. papules, pustules, flushing, etc.), nor have they been shown to alter the course of the disease.

*Safety*

- The most commonly reported adverse effects (incidence of 1% or more) reported with brimonidine topical gel include erythema, flushing, burning, sensation, contact dermatitis, sensation of warmth, paraesthesia, acne, pain (skin), blurred vision, and nasal congestion. [6]
- Serious adverse effects occurred in two children who accidentally ingested brimonidine topical gel. [6]
- In randomized clinical trials with oxymetazoline cream, the most common adverse reactions (incidence of 1% or more) were application site dermatitis, worsening inflammatory lesions of rosacea, application site pruritus, application site erythema, and application site pain. [4]

Cross References
None

Codes	Number	Description
N/A		

## References

1. Product Dossier: Mirvaso<sup>®</sup> (brimonidine gel 0.33%). Fort Worth, TX; 11/19/2013. Galderma Laboratories, L.P. Date reviewed: November 4, 2013.
2. Fowler, J, Jr., Jackson, M, Moore, A, et al. Efficacy and safety of once-daily topical brimonidine tartrate gel 0.5% for the treatment of moderate to severe facial erythema of rosacea: results of two randomized, double-blind, and vehicle-controlled pivotal studies. *Journal of drugs in dermatology: JDD*. 2013 Jun 1;12(6):650-6. PMID: 23839181
3. Moore, A, Kempers, S, Murakawa, G, et al. Long-term safety and efficacy of once-daily topical brimonidine tartrate gel 0.5% for the treatment of moderate to severe facial erythema of rosacea: results of a 1-year open-label study. *Journal of drugs in dermatology: JDD*. 2014;13:56-61. PMID: 24385120
4. Rhofade<sup>®</sup> topical cream [package insert]. Irvine, CA: Allergan; January 2017.
5. A Long-Term Safety and Efficacy Study of AGN-19920 in Patients with Persistent Erythema Associated with Rosacea. ClinicalTrials.gov. Available at: <https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT02095158?term=oxymetazoline+AND+rosacea&rank=1>
6. Mirvaso<sup>®</sup> gel [package insert]. Fort Worth, TX: Galderma Laboratories, LP; August 2013.

## Revision History

Revision Date	Revision Summary
01/13/2017	Addition of oxymetazoline cream 1% to policy
01/08/2016	Clarification of position statement