Reviewer’s report

Title: Clinical efficacy and IL-17 targeting mechanism of Indigo naturalis as a topical agent in moderate psoriasis

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Reviewer: Christoph Schempp

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Cheng et al report a randomized, vehicle-controlled in 24 patients with plaque psoriasis that were treated with indigo naturalis extract. They used the PASI Score to assess efficacy of the treatment, and additionally took biopsies for RNA expression studies.

The results are quiet impressive as 56% of the patients achieved PASI 75 already after 8 weeks of treatment. In contrast, no patient treated with placebo achieved PASI 75. Gene expression studies in biopsies showed a cytokine profile typical for psoriasis with a TH1 / TH17 inflammatory pattern, that was reduced to normal levels after treatment. In vitro data with keratinocytes showed a reduction of IL-17 induced IL-6 expression mainly by tryptanthrin.

This is very fine work that is worth to be published without major corrections. Minor point: Please indicate if the test substances in vitro are not toxic at effective concentrations.

In the introduction, the authors might give a short overlook over alternate complementary treatments for psoriasis (for ex see Reuter et al. JDDG; 2010/8:788-796).

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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Yes

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