BACKGROUND: Rosacea is a common skin condition but the treatments currently available are not satisfactory.

OBJECTIVES: To assess the efficacy of intense pulsed light (IPL) for treatment of stage I rosacea (flushing, erythema and telangiectasia).

METHODS: Thirty-four patients were treated, 25 women and nine men, mean age 47 years. The treatment employed was IPL 515-1200 nm, with a 560 nm cut-off filter. The fluence range was 24-32 J cm\(^{-2}\). Four treatments were administered on the face at 3-week intervals. Erythema values were measured at baseline and at the end of the treatment period on the cheeks and chin. Digital photographs were assessed by a consultant dermatologist on a 10-point visual analogue scale (VAS). Patients' assessments were also made using a 10-point VAS. Outcome measures were repeated 6 months after treatment.

RESULTS: After four treatments the mean reduction of the erythema values was 39% on the cheeks (P < 0.001) and 22% on the chin (P < 0.001). This was confirmed by photographic assessment where erythema improved by 46% and telangiectasia by 55% (P < 0.001). The severity of rosacea was reduced on average by 3.5 points on the 10-point VAS. Patients' and physicians' assessments of the overall improvement of rosacea were similar: more than 50% improvement was noticed in 73% and 83% of patients, respectively (P < 0.001). The results were sustained at 6 months. Side-effects were minimal and self-limiting.

CONCLUSIONS: IPL significantly reduces erythema and telangiectasia of rosacea and this is sustained for at least 6 months.

PMID: 18565174 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]