

Original Article

Evaluation of efficacy and in-use tolerance of Venusia Acne facewash in men and/or women

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: Venusia Acne facewash is formulated with a synergistic blend of mild surfactants, humectants, and soothing agents to cleanse while maintaining skin hydration. The study evaluated its efficacy and in-use skin tolerance in men and women compared with baseline.

Materials and Methods: This single-center, single-arm, non-randomized, interventional study enrolled men and/or women aged ≥ 15 years with grade 2–3 acne as per investigator global assessment (IGA) scale. Subjects used Venusia Acne facewash twice daily for 15 days. Skin pH and pore cleansing efficacy were assessed at baseline, 15–20 min post-application, and Day 15, along with representative full-face photographs of select subjects taken at the same time points. Transepidermal water loss (TEWL), acne severity (IGA scale), acne lesion characteristics (3D imaging), and skin tolerance (erythema and edema using modified Draize scale) were evaluated at baseline and Day 15, alongside standardized photographs of acne sites. Consumer feedback was collected on Day 15 through a structured questionnaire.

Results: Of 77 enrolled subjects, 74 completed the study. The mean age was 27.99 ± 8.75 years, and 66.2% were female. Among the total study population, 32 subjects with acne grade 2–3 were evaluated for 3D imaging parameters. Skin pH remained stable both immediately after first use and after 15 days, indicating no disruption of skin acidity. From baseline to Day 15, TEWL significantly decreased from 16.42 ± 3.39 to 15.57 ± 3.27 ($p = 0.001$), reflecting improved skin barrier function. Mean IGA acne severity scores showed a significant reduction from 2.22 ± 0.42 to 1.88 ± 0.66 ($p = 0.003$). 3D imaging showed a slight increase in mean maximum pore depth 15–20 min post-application (0.033 ± 0.010 mm to 0.036 ± 0.011 mm). From baseline to Day 15, significant improvements were observed in mean maximum pore depth and reductions in acne lesion volume, area, and height (all having $p = 0.001$). Over 95% of subjects agreed or strongly agreed that the face wash was gentle, cleansed effectively, controlled oil, and reported that they liked the product overall. No subjects showed any signs of erythema, oedema, or skin intolerance, and no adverse events were reported throughout the study.

Conclusion: Venusia Acne facewash use over 15 days was associated with improvements in acne outcomes and skin barrier function without altering skin pH or causing irritation. The product demonstrated excellent skin tolerance, safety, and user satisfaction, indicating its potential suitability for regular use in individuals with acne-prone skin.

Keywords: 3D imaging, Acne vulgaris, Investigator global assessment, Skin pH, Skin tolerance, Transepidermal water loss

INTRODUCTION

Acne vulgaris is one of the most common dermatological conditions and has shown a steady global increase over the past three decades, particularly among adolescents and adults across

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different ethnicities.^[1,2] Saurat *et al.* reported a global acne prevalence of approximately 20.5%.^[1] In South Asia alone, an estimated 39.6 million individuals aged 10–24 years were affected with acne in 2021, with India reporting the highest number of new adolescent cases, reaching 15.7 million.^[2] Factors in acne pathophysiology include excess sebum production, follicular hyperkeratinization, *Cutibacterium acnes* colonization, and inflammation.^[3,4] Androgen-stimulated sebaceous glands secrete lipids that serve as substrates for *C. acnes*, which hydrolyzes sebum triglycerides into free fatty acids through lipases, creating an acidic, proinflammatory milieu at pH 4.5–5.5, resulting in acne lesions.^[5] These lesions may present as inflammatory (papules, pustules, nodules, cysts) or non-inflammatory (black/open or white/closed comedones) acne.^[3,6] However, inflammation is reported to occur at all stages of acne, irrespective of acne type.^[7] Acne-prone individuals often exhibit compromised skin barrier function, posing significant challenges in acne management.^[6] It increases transepidermal water loss (TEWL), heightened sensitivity, inflammation, and worsening of acne symptoms.^[6]

Effective treatment is thus essential, and many molecules have been investigated for their efficacy in acne management. Salicylic acid, a beta-hydroxy acid, has been reported to penetrate follicles, clear debris, and reduce inflammation while showing good tolerance in mild comedonal and papular acne.^[6,8] Combination with zinc gluconate and lipohydroxy acid has been reported to reduce lesions and improve skin barrier health.^[9] Niacinamide, a form of Vitamin B3, when used with salicylic acid and benzoyl peroxide, has been shown to maintain treatment efficacy with improved tolerability in mild-to-moderate facial acne.^[10] Multi-acid formulations have also shown benefits in reducing lesion counts and improving skin texture, with minimal adverse events (AEs).^[11] Zinc, particularly as zinc pyrrolidone carboxylic acid (Zinc PCA), has been used in acne therapy due to its anti-inflammatory properties, antibacterial, and sebum-regulating effects.^[12-14]

Ingredients such as salicylic acid, niacinamide, glycolic acid, and zinc PCA play a key role in acne management by regulating sebum production, anti-inflammatory activity, and improving the skin barrier function. The Venusia Acne facewash contains these actives, along with gentle surfactants and skin-conditioning agents to support hydration and minimize irritation. Despite these theoretical benefits, clinical evidence evaluating the efficacy and in-use tolerability of this multi-ingredient formulation in acne-prone individuals remains limited. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the efficacy and skin tolerability of Venusia Acne facewash in men and/or women with healthy or acne-prone skin.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design

This was a single-center, single-arm, non-randomized, interventional study conducted over 15 days to evaluate the efficacy and in-use tolerance of Venusia Acne facewash compared with baseline.

Ethical approval

The study was approved by the Independent Ethics Committee of C.L.A.I.M.S. Pvt. Ltd (ECR/245/Indt/MH/2015/RR-22; June 04, 2025). It was conducted in accordance with the approved protocol (Protocol no: CL/022/0425/STU, Version 1, dated May 07, 2025), BIS (Bureau of Indian standards) guidelines (IS 4011:2018 Third Revision, July 2018 guidelines) Indian Council for Medical Research guidelines, The International Council for Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use E6 (R3), Guideline for Good Clinical Practice, Good Clinical Laboratory practices, Declaration of Helsinki, and applicable regulatory requirements. This trial was registered with the Clinical Trial Registry of India (CTRI/2025/06/089480).

Informed consent

The study procedures, risks, and benefits were explained to the subjects/subject's parents (for subjects <18 years) by the Investigator before screening. Written informed consent was obtained from subjects or their parents/guardians.

Study subjects

Men and women aged ≥ 15 years with healthy skin at test sites or grade 2–3 acne according to investigator global assessment (IGA) scale were enrolled. Exclusion criteria included pregnancy or lactation, known allergies to cosmetic products, those deemed unlikely to comply with study requirements, existing skin disorders, and use of systemic or topical treatments (e.g., topical steroids) within the past month that could interfere with the study treatment.

Study objectives

The primary objective was to evaluate the efficacy of Venusia Acne facewash in men and/or women compared with baseline. The secondary objective was to evaluate skin intolerances by clinically assessing erythema and oedema using the modified Draize scale following facewash use.

Study procedure

This study was for 15 days and involved 2 visits: Day 0 (Baseline, Visit 1) and Day 15 (Follow-up, Visit 2) [Figure 1].

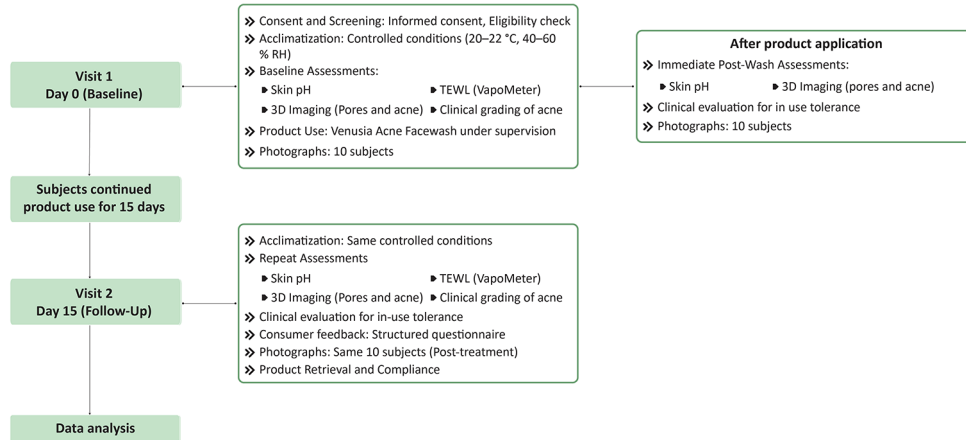


Figure 1: Study design and assessment flow. TEWL: Transepidermal water loss.

At Visit 1, subjects meeting the inclusion and exclusion criteria were enrolled. All assessments were performed under controlled environmental conditions (temperature: 20–22°C; relative humidity: 40–60%) to reduce environmental and procedural variability. Baseline assessments included demographic data, medical history, acne grading using the IGA scale, skin pH, TEWL, and 3D imaging for pores and acne. 3D imaging assessments were conducted in a subgroup of patients with clearly visible grade 2–3 acne lesions. Subjects were instructed on a standardized product application method: wetting the face, taking 2–3 mL of Venusia Acne facewash, rubbing to produce a lather, massaging in circular motions for 30 s, and rinsing with water. The product was used twice daily, morning and night, throughout the study. During Visit 1, subjects applied the facewash, after which skin pH was re-measured 15–20 min post-application. Immediate pore-cleansing efficacy was assessed using 3D imaging conducted immediately after product application in the selected participants with clearly visible grade 2–3 acne lesions. Post-application tolerance was evaluated using the Draize scale (erythema and oedema scored from 0 = no reaction to 4 = severe reaction). Standardized photographs were taken for 10 representative subjects at Baseline (pre- and immediate post-product application).

At follow-up visit, subjects were acclimatized under identical conditions and measurements of skin pH, TEWL, IGA grading, and Draize scale scoring were repeated for all subjects, while 3D imaging was repeated in the same participants. Standardized photographs of the same sites on the same 10 subjects were taken at Day 15. Consumer feedback regarding product performance was collected using a structured, study-specific questionnaire. The questionnaire was not formally validated and was used for exploratory assessment of patient-reported outcomes. All unused product samples were retrieved at the end of the study.

Efficacy assessments

Skin surface pH was measured using the Skin-pH-Meter PH 905[®] (Courage and Khazaka electronic GmbH, Germany), which features a combined glass electrode designed for selective hydrogen ion detection. TEWL was measured using the VapoMeter (Delfin Technologies, Finland), a closed-chamber device with integrated temperature and humidity sensors. The Antera 3D[®] imaging system (Miravex Ltd., Ireland) was used to evaluate skin topography and the chromophore concentration quantitatively. The device employs multi-directional light-emitting diodes illumination (455–625 nm) and computer-assisted three-dimensional skin reconstruction. On Day 15, subjects completed a structured questionnaire to assess perceived efficacy, tolerability, and overall acceptability of the product. They rated aspects including ease of use, gentleness, cleansing efficiency, acne reduction, oil or dryness control, post-use skin feel, and any irritation (tingling, itching, or burning). They also provided feedback on the texture, fragrance, and overall feel of the facewash, as well as their satisfaction and willingness to recommend the product to others.

Safety and tolerance assessments

The safety and in-use skin tolerance of Venusia Acne Facewash were assessed throughout the study. At each visit, the investigator performed a clinical examination of acne severity and skin tolerance. Acne grading was conducted using the IGA scale, ranging from 0 (clear, with possible residual hyperpigmentation or erythema) to 4 (severe, with the entire face covered with comedones, numerous papules, pustules, and a few nodules or cysts). In-use skin tolerance was evaluated for irritation using the Draize scale, graded as: 0 - no reaction, 1 - very slight, 2 - slight, 3 - moderate, and 4 - severe. Any AEs, whether product-related or not, were recorded throughout the study.

Statistical analysis

No formal sample size calculation was performed. Statistical analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (version 30.0). Continuous variables were summarized using descriptive statistics. Mean differences in continuous variables such as skin pH, 3D imaging parameters (pore cleansing and acne), and TEWL were evaluated using the Student *t*-test. Changes in clinical grading of acne were analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. All statistical tests were interpreted at 5% level of significance.

RESULTS

Between July 09, 2025, and August 11, 2025, 77 subjects were enrolled in the study, of whom three subjects dropped out due to missed follow-up visits. Data were analyzed for 74 subjects.

Subject demographics

Subjects ranged in age from 15 to 48 years, with a mean age of 27.99 ± 8.75 years. Of the subjects, 49 (66.2%) were female, and 25 (33.8%) were male. Skin types were distributed as follows: oily, 30 (40.5%); normal, dry, combination (mixed), and sensitive, 11 participants each (14.9% each) [Table 1].

Skin pH

The mean skin pH at baseline was 5.44 ± 0.75 . Immediately after the first application of Venusia Acne facewash on Day 0, the mean pH was 5.43 ± 0.66 , with a mean change from baseline of -0.01 ± 0.78 ($p = 0.912$; not significant). At Day 15, the mean skin pH was 5.47 ± 0.67 , corresponding to a mean change from baseline of 0.03 ± 0.86 . ($p = 0.765$; not significant).

Table 1: Demographic and baseline characteristics of study subjects (N=74).

Parameters	Value
Age, Mean \pm SD (years)	27.99 \pm 8.75
Gender, <i>n</i> (%)	
Male	25 (33.8)
Female	49 (66.2)
Skin types, <i>n</i> (%)	
Normal	11 (14.9)
Dry	11 (14.9)
Oily skin (having visible pores)	30 (40.5)
Mixed (combination)	11 (14.9)
Sensitive	11 (14.9)
Acne grade 2–3, <i>n</i> (%)	32 (43.2)

N: Total number of subjects, n: Number of subjects, SD: Standard deviation

These results indicate that use of the facewash did not cause any significant alteration in skin pH over the 15 days.

TEWL using VapoMeter

Mean TEWL decreased over the 15-day study period. At baseline, the subjects had a mean TEWL of 16.42 ± 3.39 , which reduced to 15.57 ± 3.27 by Day 15. The mean reduction from baseline to Day 15 was -0.85 ± 1.55 ($p = 0.001$), indicating a statistically significant decrease in TEWL and suggesting an improvement in skin barrier function [Figure 2a].

Clinical grading scores for acne

The mean score decreased from 2.22 ± 0.42 at baseline to 1.88 ± 0.66 on Day 15, with a mean difference of -0.34 ± 0.48 . This reduction was statistically significant ($p = 0.003$), indicating significant improvement in acne over the 15-day study period [Figure 2b].

Pore cleansing and acne assessment by 3D imaging

Among the total study population, 32 subjects with acne grade 2–3 were evaluated for 3D imaging parameters. The mean values of all measured 3D imaging parameters showed significant changes after 15 days of using Venusia Acne Facewash. The mean max depth of pores increased from baseline (0.033 ± 0.010 mm) to immediately after application (0.036 ± 0.011 mm) and continued to increase significantly at Day 15 (0.038 ± 0.012 mm) ($p = 0.001$), indicating significant pore cleansing efficacy. Parameters related to acne lesion size demonstrated significant reductions. The volume of a single acne lesion decreased significantly on Day 15, with a mean difference of -0.75 ± 0.48 mm² ($p = 0.001$), while the conforming area and maximum height of lesions were reduced by 3.73 ± 2.06 mm² and 0.12 ± 0.10 mm, respectively (both $p = 0.001$). These findings indicate that Venusia Acne Facewash may effectively improve pore cleansing and significantly reduce acne lesion volume, area, and height [Table 2]. Representative photographs of subjects' acne at baseline and Day 15 are provided in Figure 3, while representative photographs of the full face of one subject at baseline (before product application and immediate post-application) and Day 15 are shown in Figure 4.

Consumer feedback questionnaire

After 15 days of using the Venusia Acne facewash, subjects provided feedback on various parameters of the evaluation questionnaire, scored on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). The majority of subjects rated the product favorably across all parameters. Specifically, 100% of subjects agreed or strongly agreed that the facewash was easy to use, gentle, and

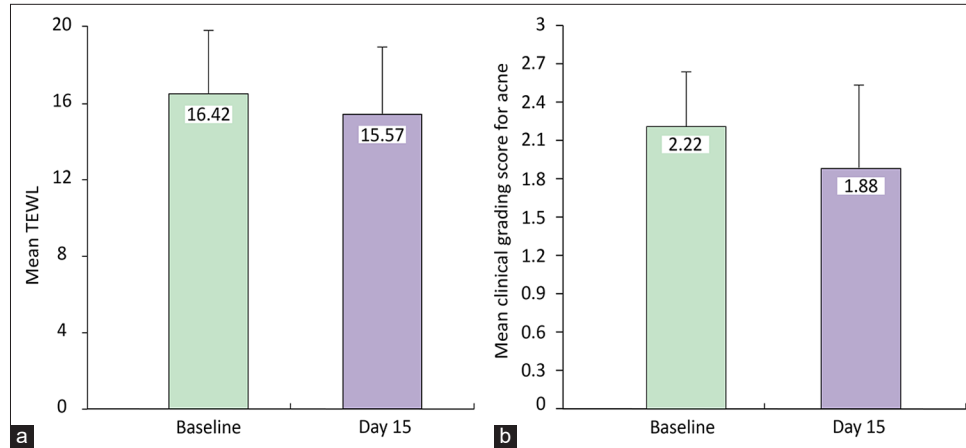


Figure 2: Mean values of (a) Transepidermal water loss (TEWL) and (b) Clinical grading scores for acne at baseline and Day 15.

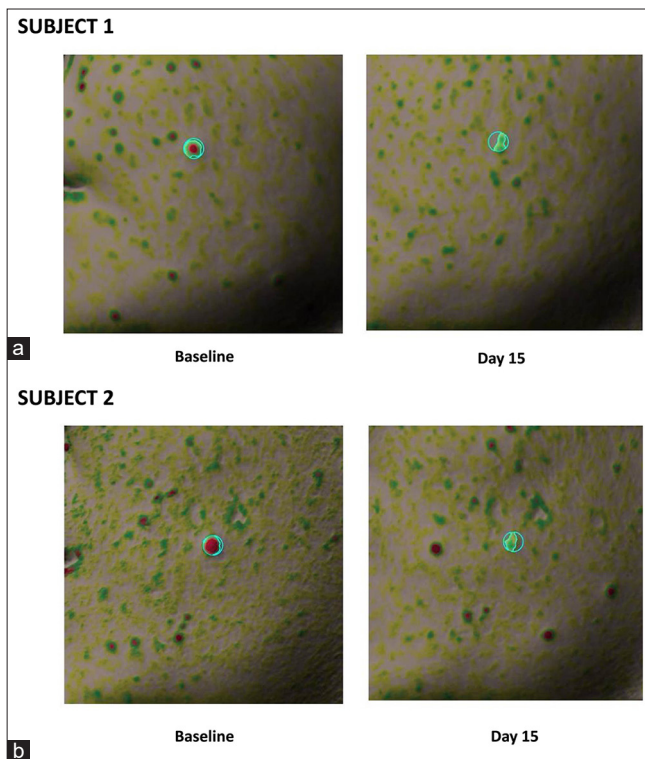


Figure 3: Representative clinical photographs showing subjects acne at (a) baseline and (b) after 15 days of treatment with Venusia Acne facewash. Images were acquired using a 3D imaging system (Antera 3D; Miravex, Ireland).

soft/smooth. For cleaning efficiency, 98.7% of subjects agreed or strongly agreed that the facewash was effective. 81.3% of subjects agreed or strongly agreed that the facewash reduced acne, while 12.5% were neutral and 6.2% disagreed. 97.2% agreed or strongly agreed that it controlled oil or dryness [Figure 5a].

Specifically, 100% of subjects disagreed or strongly disagreed that the facewash caused skin irritation (tingling, itching, or

burning). 97.3% of subjects agreed or strongly agreed that they liked the texture, fragrance, and feel of the facewash. 98.6% agreed or strongly agreed that they liked the facewash overall, and 98.7% agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the facewash to others [Figure 5b].

Safety assessment

Dermatological assessment using the modified Draize scale throughout the study period showed no signs of erythema, oedema, or any skin intolerance among subjects. No AEs related to the test product were reported during the study.

DISCUSSION

The present study evaluated the efficacy and in-use tolerance of Venusia Acne facewash in men and women over 15-days. The findings suggest that the formulation may help cleanse the skin, maintain normal skin physiology, and improve acne-related parameters, without causing irritation or AEs. Consumer feedback indicated high satisfaction with its effectiveness, tolerability, and overall performance.

Maintaining skin's physiological balance is essential for skin health, and skin pH helps preserve the slightly acidic environment that supports resident skin microflora, minimizes pathogenic bacterial colonization, and maintains barrier function.^[15] In this study, Venusia Acne facewash did not significantly alter skin pH, remaining stable between 5.4 and 5.5 throughout 15 days, indicating preservation of skin's natural acidity by the product. It also improved barrier integrity, demonstrated by a significant reduction in TEWL, a key indicator of skin barrier function and hydration.^[16] This is especially important for acne-prone skin, where barrier function is often compromised by inflammation and topical acne treatments.^[17] Decrease in TEWL suggests that the formulation is gentle and non-stripping, aligning with evidence that mild

Table 2: Comparison of 3D imaging measurements of pore depth and acne lesions between baseline and Day 15.

3D imaging	Mean±SD		Mean difference (Baseline-Day 15)	p-value
	Baseline	Day 15		
Mean-Max depth of pores (mm) (n=30)	0.033±0.010	0.038±0.012	0.004±0.006	0.001*
Volume of single acne (mm ³) (n=32)	1.27±0.45	0.52±0.41	-0.75±0.48	0.001*
Conforming area of single acne (mm ²) (n=32)	9.08±3.01	5.35±3.01	-3.73±2.06	0.001*
Maximum height of single acne (mm) (n=32)	0.28±0.07	0.16±0.08	-0.12±0.10	0.001*

*By student “t” Test, (p ≤ 0.05) mm: Millimeter, n: Number of subjects, SD: Standard deviation

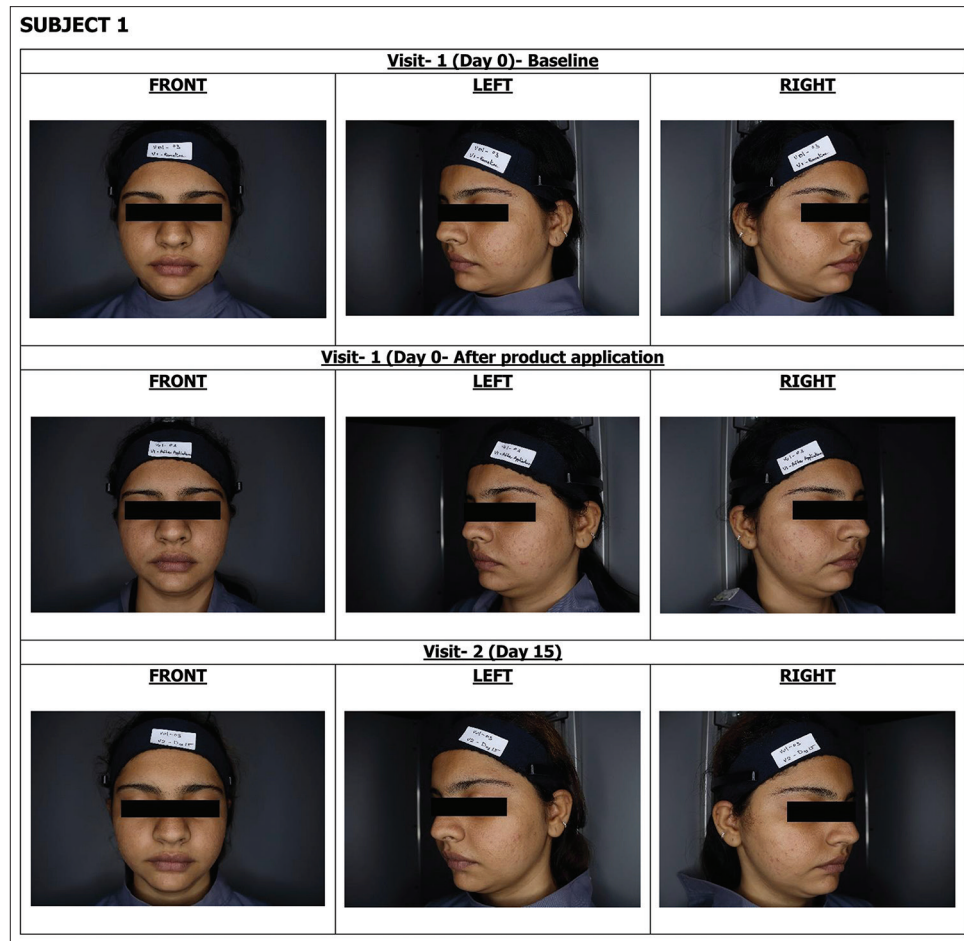


Figure 4: Representative photographs of the full face of one subject at baseline (before product application and immediate post-application) and at Day 15 of treatment with Venusia Acne facewash.

surfactant-based cleansers help protect barrier integrity and reduce TEWL.^[18]

A statistically significant reduction in acne severity, as measured by the IGA scale, was observed by Day 15. This improvement was corroborated by 3D imaging, which showed changes in pore characteristics and acne lesion parameters. Furthermore, acne lesion volume, area, and height significantly reduced, reflecting an overall improvement in acne. These findings suggest that the

formulation may contribute to improvements in acne-related parameters within a short period. This aligns with evidence emphasizing the use of gentle, non-comedogenic, and non-irritating formulations to effectively remove debris and excess sebum without aggravating acne.^[19] Such cleansers, used alongside supportive skincare, can also enhance adherence and improve therapeutic outcomes.^[20]

No cases of erythema, edema, or other cutaneous reactions were reported during the study, thus classifying the product

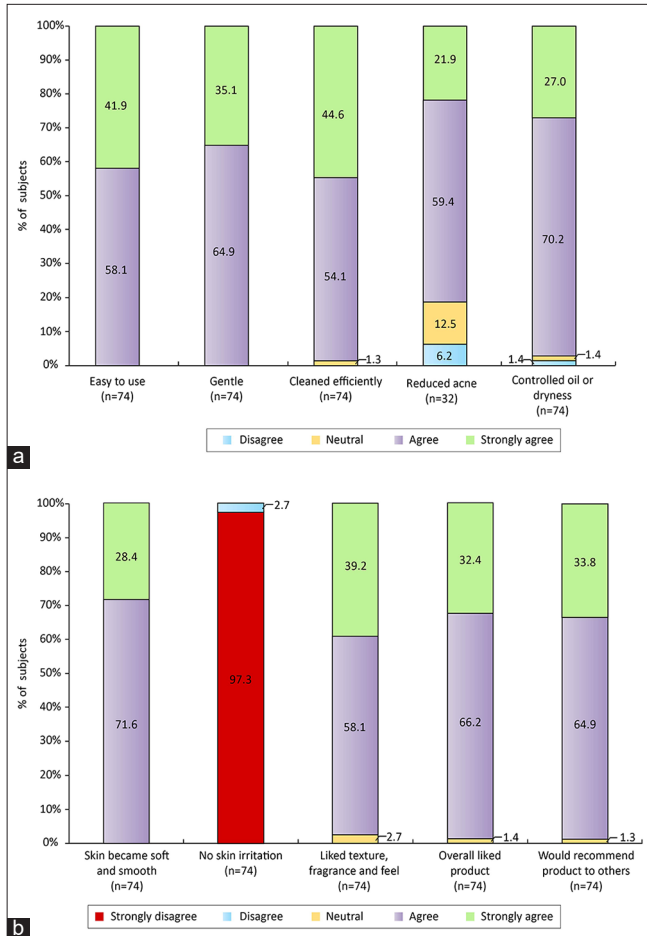


Figure 5: The percentage of subjects reporting grades of “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “neutral,” “agree,” and “strongly agree,” for (a) product efficacy, (b) product tolerance, and overall satisfaction after 15 days of using Venusia Acne facewash.

as a non-irritant. All subjects tolerated the product well, and no product-related AEs occurred. This confirms the excellent dermatological safety profile of Venusia Acne facewash, even with twice-daily use over 2 weeks. Gentle cleansing system and non-comedogenic formulation likely contributed to the absence of irritation, even among subjects with sensitive skin.

Feedback from subjects in the current study further supported the objective findings. Most participants reported positive experiences with the facewash, describing it as gentle and easy to use. In particular, 81.3% of subjects strongly agreed that the product effectively reduced acne, highlighting its clinical effectiveness. Nearly all subjects were satisfied with the product’s feel, texture, and fragrance, and there were no reports of tingling, itching, or burning sensations. Overall liking and willingness to recommend the product were high, indicating strong consumer confidence and acceptability.

The formulation contains ingredients such as salicylic acid, glycolic acid, niacinamide, zinc-PCA, ceramides, hyaluronic

acid, oat extract, and *Aloe vera*, which are generally associated with cleansing, exfoliation, anti-inflammatory, and barrier-supporting properties.^[6,14,21-29] Together, the ingredients in Venusia Acne facewash form a synergistic formulation that effectively reduces acne lesions while helping to support skin barrier function and hydration. However, this study did not evaluate the individual contribution of these components, and the observed effects cannot be attributed to any specific ingredient.

From a real-world perspective, the observed improvements in acne severity, lesion characteristics, skin pH, and TEWL may provide practical benefits to the consumer and have important implications for long-term acne management. A cleanser that effectively reduces acne lesions while maintaining barrier integrity and hydration is more likely to be used consistently, supporting sustained acne control.^[16,29] Preservation of physiological skin pH and good tolerability may help minimize dryness, irritation, and rebound oiliness, common factors affecting adherence in daily use.^[18] By reducing acne lesions without compromising tolerability, the formulation may help prevent flare-ups. High consumer satisfaction with ease of use, gentleness, cleaning efficacy, and overall skin feel further supports its suitability for routine, long-term use. Collectively, these attributes suggest that regular use of Venusia Acne Facewash may contribute to sustained adherence and improved long-term acne outcomes in real-world settings.

This study has several strengths. It employed objective assessments, including skin pH, TEWL, and 3D imaging, alongside clinical grading and subjective measures, enabling comprehensive evaluation of efficacy and tolerability. Controlled environmental conditions and standardized application procedures further enhanced data reliability. The study also has the following limitations. The single-arm, non-randomized design without a control or comparator group restricts the ability to attribute all observed effects solely to the test formulation. The short 15-day study duration limits interpretation to early or short-term responses rather than sustained therapeutic effects. Improvements in acne severity, including modest reductions in IGA scores, may reflect natural fluctuations and may not represent clinically meaningful changes, particularly in participants with moderate acne (Grade 2–3). TEWL reductions were modest yet statistically significant; however, in the absence of a control group, it is difficult to attribute these changes definitively to true improvements in skin barrier function rather than natural variability or measurement-related fluctuations, despite assessments being conducted under controlled conditions. Similarly, increases in pore depth observed through 3D imaging may indicate changes in surface debris or sebum, but may be influenced by imaging algorithms, light reflectance, and surface characteristics.

Safety findings are also based on short-term use and may not detect delayed irritant or allergic reactions, particularly for formulations containing active ingredients such as salicylic acid or glycolic acid. In addition, patient-reported outcomes may be influenced by the open-label design and the use of a non-validated questionnaire. No formal sample size calculation was performed, which may limit the statistical power of subgroup analyses, such as 3D imaging, and the ability to detect clinically meaningful differences. Longer-duration, controlled studies with appropriate comparators, involving larger and more diverse populations, are recommended to confirm efficacy, safety, and clinically meaningful improvements in acne management with extended use.

CONCLUSION

Venusia Acne Facewash was associated with improvements in acne parameters and pore cleansing while maintaining the physiological skin pH and supporting skin barrier function over 15 days. The formulation was well-tolerated, with no AEs reported, and achieved high consumer satisfaction. These findings support the use of Venusia Acne Facewash as an effective, gentle, and well-tolerated cleansing option for regular use in individuals with acne-prone and sensitive skin.

Ethical approval: The research/study approved by the Independent Ethics Committee of C.L.A.I.M.S., number ECR/245/Indt/MH/2015/RR-22, dated 4th June 2025.

CTR Number: CTRI/2025/06/089480.

Declaration of patient consent: The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. In the form, the patient has given consent for their images and other clinical information to be reported in the journal. The patient understand that the patient's names and initials will not be published and due efforts will be made to conceal their identity, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

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Conflicts of interest: All authors are employees of Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for manuscript preparation: The authors confirm that there was no use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for assisting in the writing or editing of the manuscript and no images were manipulated using AI.

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