

Talk in Review Lupus and the Brain

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Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is a chronic autoimmune disease that can attack any part of the body. Many people are familiar with lupus, especially affected by lupus such as the skin (rash, hair, joint, muscle, etc.) such as arthritis and fatigue. However, lupus can also affect the brain and nerves. You may not even notice the brain and nerves at neurophysiatric lupus or neuro-lupus symptoms.

How can the brain be affected in a patient with SLE?

There are many ways that lupus or medication to affect the brain and nerves. One cause is blood vessel disease causing the brain or nerves cells. The percentage of patients with lupus affected in the brain or nerves is 10-15% in some studies. In the SLE cohort in Tanjong Pagar Hospital, Singapore, only 4.5% (4 of 5 out of 10) patients had neurophysiatric SLE.

Being diagnosed with SLE is a stressful event. Anxiety and depression may occur just from coping with the disease. For the neurological lupus, besides the severe lupus patients and their families. Patients may have depression, sleep disturbance, loss of appetite, and it may increase difficulty to do daily work.

Early diagnosis and treatment may prevent an irreversible condition.

How does Lupus damage brain and nerve cells?

New data may be damaged when an attack nerve of blood vessels. Lupus can trigger an abnormal through blood vessels that lead the brain, spinal cord and nerves. If the blood flow is abnormal or interrupted, the cells of the nervous system become damaged and nerve function impaired.

What are the symptoms of Lupus affecting the brain and nerves?

The symptoms that a patient may experience depend on the location of the brain, and how much tissue is damaged.

Some symptoms in the brain include:

- Stroke
- Difficulty change to executive
- Fatigue
- Decrease hallucinations
- Poor memory or difficulty concentrating
- Depression or mood swings
- Sleep problems



Some symptoms in the brain, spinal nerves and eye:

- Weakness and numbness of the arms or legs
- Difficulty in controlling bowel movement or urination
- Visual problems

How will my doctor decide whether my symptoms are due to lupus?

Other medical conditions such as infections, thyroid disease, liver and kidney failure or myeloma condition can also cause similar symptoms. Medication, alcohol and drugs also should be considered when symptoms.

Your doctor will talk to you to find out if you have other symptoms and what you've tried and how well you've been able to manage your symptoms.

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What treatment will I need if I have neurophysiatric lupus?

Most patients require high dose steroids that will be gradually tapered, with or without immunosuppressive or cytotoxic medication. Some patients may require medication to help the blood vessels to supply to the brain. Other drugs that may be used include anti-depressants or anti-anxiety drugs.

Your doctor may also recommend that you go for therapies such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy or psychological therapy.

Will it be cured?

As lupus is an autoimmune disease, the disease cannot be cured, but can be managed. Hence, taking your medication regularly and coming for scheduled appointments is extremely important to make sure that your lupus remains well controlled.



系统性红斑狼疮与 胸部的关系

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系统性红斑狼疮 (Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, SLE) 是一种全身性自身免疫病。当免疫系统错误地攻击自身组织时，会引起炎症、疼痛、肿胀、疲劳、发热、脱发、关节疼痛以及肾脏、心脏、肺部和神经系统的损害。SLE 的症状多种多样，有些症状可能与胸部有关。

系统性红斑狼疮与胸部的关系

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The Ups & Downs of Lupus

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It was during one of my recent holidays that I first became aware I had been swimming weaker than for 3 hours and felt somewhat jittery 2 weeks I developed joint pain, fatigue and loss of appetite. Years of all, my weight plummeted from 42kg to 38kg. My parents accompanied me to various Chinese physicians over the next 2 months but there was no relief from my suffering despite the various bottles of bitter concoctions I had to take. The fever continued to wax and wane, soon my family had no choice but to bring me to the nearest hospital, much to my dismay.

How can the brain be affected in a patient with SLE?

There are many ways that lupus or medication to affect the brain and nerves. One cause is blood vessel disease causing the brain or nerves cells. The percentage of patients with lupus affected in the brain or nerves is 10-15% in some studies. In the SLE cohort in Tanjong Pagar Hospital, Singapore, only 4.5% (4 of 5 out of 10) patients had neurophysiatric SLE.

Being diagnosed with SLE is a stressful event. Anxiety and depression may occur just from coping with the disease. For the neurological lupus, besides the severe lupus patients and their families. Patients may have depression, sleep disturbance, loss of appetite, and it may increase difficulty to do daily work.

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How does Lupus damage brain and nerve cells?

New data may be damaged when an attack nerve of blood vessels. Lupus can trigger an abnormal through blood vessels that lead the brain, spinal cord and nerves. If the blood flow is abnormal or interrupted, the cells of the nervous system become damaged and nerve function impaired.

What are the symptoms of Lupus affecting the brain and nerves?

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