

A BRIEF WORD ON SKIN INFECTIONS IN LUPUS

Dr Derrick Aw, Senior Consultant, NUHS

A study published by Oh et al in the Singapore Medical Journal in 1993 showed that out of 38 lupus patients who were hospitalised for infection or who developed an infection while hospitalised, the site of highest rate of infection was the skin and soft tissue. Hence, it is good for lupus patients to learn about some common skin infections.

When a lupus patient contracts an infection, it tends to last longer, be more extensive and be repeated as well. In particular, lupus patients taking immune-suppressive drugs such as prednisolone (in high doses), azathioprine, cyclophosphamide, cyclosporine and mycophenolate are more prone to infections. Do note that people with lupus tend to develop infections more easily even when not taking these drugs!

VIRAL INFECTIONS

After one has had chickenpox, the virus remains dormant in the spinal roots, waiting for a chance to be reactivated. Such opportunities tend to arise when one is ill or is taking strong doses of immune-suppressive drugs. The disease, called **zoster** or **shingles**, manifests itself on the skin of a particular nerve root as a localised band of many painful bubbles on top of red blotches. If you think you have zoster, quickly see your doctor for urgent treatment. Sometimes, the disease spreads from a single band on the body, to involve other parts of the body – this is a bad sign ("disseminated zoster"). You may need hospitalisation for intravenous antiviral treatment. There is now a vaccine available that is licensed for individuals above 60 years old which can help significantly lower one's chances of developing zoster (as well as the risk of developing persistent pain that may develop when the shingles has subsided), but I would recommend it only if one is not on high doses of prednisolone.

Another common viral infection on the skin is **warts**. This infection is contracted by contact, but it may take weeks to years before the virus causes a wart to develop. A typical wart looks like a hard rough bump; if you look very closely, you may observe many tiny black dots on its surface. People whose immune systems are compromised tend to develop warts in greater numbers and which are slightly more resistant to treatment. Warts are harmless, but can spread to other parts of your body if left untreated. You may buy a wart solution from a pharmacy and apply to the wart(s) daily and diligently. If you have too many warts, or warts that are present around and/or under the nails, or warts located on 'sensitive' body parts, or if you simply need a quicker solution, do see a dermatologist for destruction of the warts either using a freezing, cautery or laser device.

FUNGAL INFECTIONS

A common fungal infection is '**ringworm**' – the itchy rash appears as multiple and confluent rings of red and scaling. **Yeast infection** appears as scaly red bumps, often joined together and the little bumps individually fan out further from the central concentrated part. In the toeweb, yeast infection looks like a smooth whitish sheen which is sometimes cracked or eroded (from friction). Skin fungal infections most often occur on body folds (because the local humidity and temperature are most conducive for fungus growth) such as armpits, butt cracks, groins, and below the breasts. However, beware of these infections masquerading as 'eczema' on palms and soles and private parts. If in doubt, consult a dermatologist to ascertain the diagnosis. If you are certain you have 'ringworm' or a straightforward yeast infection, you can purchase an antifungal cream from a pharmacy and apply to the affected area(s) twice daily. When the rash clears, remember to continue using that same cream on the same areas twice daily for another four weeks to make sure that the fungus is totally eradicated. If the rash is intensely itchy, you may also get hydrocortisone cream from a pharmacist to apply together with the antifungal cream. Always keep the body and folds dry and maintain good hygiene, or else the fungal infection is going to return!

SHINGLES



SKIN WART



RINGWORM

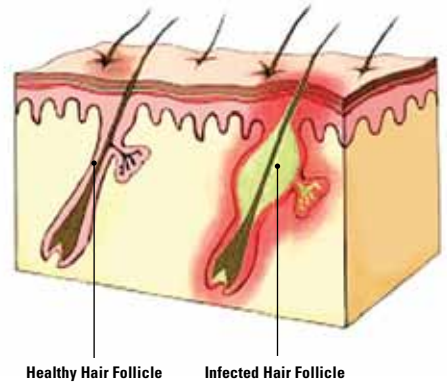


BACTERIAL INFECTIONS

Common bacterial infections are folliculitis (appear as red bumps with or without pus on hair follicles on skin); furuncles (boils associated with hair follicles); impetigo (blisters, crusts and little pus-filled bumps on the skin); and cellulitis (a deep red warm patch of skin which is often associated with fever and malaise). See a doctor if you suspect you have a bacterial skin infection – don't self-treat!

So in summary, you can definitely learn to identify common viral and fungal infections and treat most of them by yourselves first. If you have access to the Internet, check out the images of these infections to give you a clearer picture of the descriptions in this brief article. If ever in doubt, don't hesitate to see your friendly dermatologist for advice and help!

FOLLICULITIS



狼疮与皮肤病

Dr Derrick Aw

新加坡医疗期刊在1993年刊登了一篇报道，由Oh et al进行的研究显示38名入院治疗皮肤病或入院时出现皮肤病的狼疮病患中，常常出现的皮肤发炎是皮肤和细胞。因此，认知一般皮肤病是有益的。

当狼疮病人患上皮肤病时，它是长久的、更深沉的也是重复性的，尤其是服用类固醇的病人，更容易感染皮肤病。值得留意的一点是，就算是没有服用类固醇的狼疮病人，也更容易产生皮肤感染。

病毒

一个人出了水痘后，病菌仍然在脊椎里潜伏着。生病的时候或服用类固醇时，容易复发。这个名称为带状疱疹(zoster 或shingles)的病毒，是在皮肤表层出现水泡和红斑。如果你觉得自己感染了这个病毒，请赶紧求医治疗。有时候，它会从身体上的一个部位传染到另一个部位。这时候你或许需要入院观察。如今市面上有一种预防针，能帮助60岁以上的人士减少感染带状疱疹的机会和减低病毒消退后的持续疼痛几率。但是，我只建议没有服用高剂量类固醇的人打预防针。

另一个病毒是疣(warts)。它是通过与他人接触而感染的，潜伏期是数周至数年。它的表层像硬包囊，但如果仔细查看，你会发现很多小黑斑。免疫系统弱的人容易感染，对治疗过程也产生抗拒因子。疣是无害的，但如果没有治疗，可能传染到其他部位。你可以从药局购买药物。如果你有很多疣，需要快速治疗或其他因素如它出现在指甲周围、敏感部位等，可以咨询专科医生治疗。

真菌病

一种普遍真菌病叫做癣(ringworm)。它会在皮肤表层出现红斑、脱落，也可能产生瘙痒。另一真菌

叫做Yeast infection。它也是在皮肤表层出现红斑，它们一般是连贯的，从中心扩散。它在脚上出现的话，则像白色的一层。它有时会因为摩擦而破裂。真菌感染常常出现在手臂下、敏感部位等身体衔接部位。因为湿气和温度促成真菌生长。但是，有的时候，湿疹也会出现相同症状。如果你确定是真菌感染，才向药房购买药物。当情况好转时，请记得继续在同样地方一日涂抹两次，持续涂抹四周，以便彻底断却病根。如果皮肤瘙痒可以购买hydrocortisone cream和antifungal cream。记得要保持清洁和卫生，否则真菌病毒还是会找上门来的！

细菌感染

普遍细菌感染包括毛囊炎(folliculitis)(在皮肤表层出现红肿，或许有包囊)、疔疮(furuncles)、(一种包囊)、脓疱疮(impetigo)(一种皮肤擦伤和小脓包)和蜂窝型组织(cellulitis)(与发烧和malaise有关，在皮肤上出现深红色的一块)。请不要自医，尽早求医。

总的来说，如果学会辨认皮肤感染，就能自行治疗。上网查看照片会更加清楚。如果有问题，也可以向专科医生寻求帮助！

My Journey with Lupus



Serene Mai, Hon. Sec, LAS

When I was nine years old, I discovered a hard lump on my neck. I went up to my mum and she brought me to see a paediatrician and was scheduled for an operation to remove the lump.

After the operation, it turned out that the lump was a harmless cyst. But following discharge, I developed a 41-degree high fever. I was rushed to the A&E. Before I knew it, I was hospitalised, and later diagnosed with lupus.

Having lupus as a young kid was very challenging. I was a skinny little girl who ballooned over a short span of a couple of weeks because of steroid treatment. I returned to school and my best friend shunned away because she couldn't recognise me. I had to miss school a lot and needed to catch up on homework.

Thankfully I graduated from primary school with a PSLE aggregate of 260 and managed to enter a good secondary school, but adapting to secondary school proved to be a challenge as well.

I started to develop kidney complications when I was about Secondary 2. Doctors put me on IV cyclophosphamide and my hair started falling out, and I had to miss school regularly for treatment.

At 14, I was a teenage girl who barely had any hair.

Then, I started to worry about my physical development. One day, I told my mum that she didn't have to follow me to the doctor. That appointment, I asked the doctor to prescribe me hormone pills, and I broke down in his office when I told him that I felt I wasn't growing properly and my friends made fun of me because of my petite size.

Eventually, I graduated with fantastic grades for my 'O' Levels, but even when I was good enough to be in the top JC, my body didn't agree. I became anaemic, and I felt so tired every single day. I struggled with my studies, so one day, I told my mother that I had decided to go to a polytechnic. I wanted to pursue Biomedical Science.

I underwent a period of depression in the couple of months I stayed home, waiting for polytechnic to start. I lost interest in everything, even shopping, and all I would do was sleep the entire day, only waking up to eat.

I decided I needed to get a grip of myself, so I visited Lupus Association. Here, Nancy and the rest taught me to make pretty necklaces that made their way to the TTSH Museum and I was very happy that the necklace I made was put on sale for about \$40. I was very thankful for that brief period in LAS because it lifted my depression and gave me purpose in the things that I was doing.

My health eventually got under control with a few flares occasionally, but I am grateful that I have the care and support from friends and family. I met my loving husband whom I shared about my illness with before we met,

and he was very supportive and took great care of me – we married last year in May. With the right treatment, you can also be able to lead a normal life and do the things that you love.

That's a brief story of my journey with lupus for the past 20 years.

But what I REALLY wanted to share today, is not so much about the details of my illness, because each and every one of you here today has a different lupus journey to go through and a different story to tell. Because we all know, lupus is a disease of a thousand faces, and it can manifest in so many different ways.

Today I really wanted to talk about Ms Linda Woo.

Linda appeared in The Straits Times many years ago, when I was still in my pre-teens. I do not have the newspaper clipping with me any longer, but I can still vividly remember the picture of her and her husband sitting side by side, smiling. The article described how she and her husband met and how they eventually got married despite the fact that she had SLE. That really inspired me as a child, to know that unconditional love exists. That was something really important to me at that point in life.

A few years later, I recall Linda again in the news, this time about her bearing a child in the midst of having dialysis! Again, it encouraged me to know that having a child IS possible despite having SLE. By the way, if you will like to know more about Linda's story, do grab a copy of our DVD 'Lupus – Disease of A Thousand Faces'.

Today, being able to come up here and be vulnerable to all of you, sharing my story, is not an easy task. But I am here because someone else did this before me, and that person inspired and encouraged me. I hope that my story will continue to inspire and encourage you as well.

It is not easy to deal with a chronic disease. In a lot of cases, like mine, the struggle isn't so much about the physical pain (I am thankful that I do not have to suffer from physical pain as much as some of you here), but rather the emotional aspect. It's easy to fall into the trap of self-pity and a sense of a loss of worth and meaning in life.

But when you look beyond your condition and focus on caring for others, something magical happens. Not only will you gradually become more thankful of the things that you have, because you could have had less, it also surprisingly makes you feel better.

Recently I came across this article on CNN titled 'Your Happiness Type Matters'. This article states that happiness comes from two sources: the first type comes from self-gratification, and the second type comes from working toward a sense of meaning in your life, or contributing to some kind of cause, like Mother Teresa, or the Dalai Lama.





Scientists at the University of North Carolina extracted genetic material from the blood of 80 healthy adults who were screened for these two types of happiness.

The results found that people who experience well-being from self-gratification had high inflammation and low antiviral and antibody gene expression, a result similar to those people who are depressed or experience great stress. On the other hand, people who found happiness by pursuing a greater good had a lower level of this inflammatory gene expression and strong antiviral and antibody gene expression.

The bottom line? Happiness that comes from working for the greater good has a much more positive impact.

So the next time you feel miserable, find something meaningful that you can do. It does not always have to involve speaking or physically helping someone else. It can be something as easy as donating your clothes for a cause, or sharing that Facebook post about someone who needs help. Not only it distracts you from the pain or the depression, it also makes you feel good about helping others.

I hope my sharing has encouraged you.

我的红斑狼疮经历

麦秀萍

当我九岁时，我发现颈项有个肿块。我的母亲带我见医生，并且动手术除去肿块。动完手术后，我们才发现那是个良性肿块。但是出院后，我发高烧。于是，我又重新入院，并且被诊断出患上红斑狼疮。

儿童患上红斑狼疮是个具有挑战性的事。由于服用类固醇治疗，在短短的几个星期内，我从一个身形瘦弱的女生变得身形庞大。返回校后，我的好朋友不认得我并疏远我。我也必须做很多功课，以便赶上课业进度。

庆幸的是，我的小六会考积分为260，就读不错的中学。但是，适应中学生涯也是具有挑战性的。

中二时期，我的肾脏出现问题。医生让我打点滴治疗。我的头发脱落并且常常无法去上课。

十四岁时，我没有什么头发。

后来，我开始担心自己的发育成长。一日，我告诉母亲不必陪伴我去看医生。那次，我要求医生给我荷尔蒙药物。我告诉医生说觉得自己发育不良，同学们也因为我的身形而取笑我。

最终，我以优良的O水准成绩毕业，能进入数一数二的初院。可是，身体却不适应。我贫血，每天也感到很累，课业也有挑战。一日，我告诉母亲想到理工学院修读生物科学。

理工学院还没开课前，有好几个月，我患上忧郁症，呆在家里。我对一切失去兴趣，甚至是购物，每天只想睡觉，睡醒了就吃。

之后，我想振作起来，便到狼疮协会。在那里，Nancy 和其他人教我做美丽的项链。这些项链在陈笃生医院售卖，我做的项链也筹得40元。我很感激在狼疮协会的那段日子。因为它给予我人生的意义，也令我重新振作。

虽然偶尔会发作，我的病情稳定了。我很感谢家人和朋友的支持和鼓励。我遇到我的先生，并告诉他我的病情，他很支持和照顾我。我们去年5月结婚。一旦有了恰当的治疗，狼疮病人就能过着一般的生活，追求目标。

这是我和狼疮20年来的简短历程。

但是，我真正想和大家分享的，并不是狼疮病情。我知道每个人都有不同的狼疮病情和故事。大家都晓得，狼疮是个具有多种面貌的疾病，也有多种症状。

其实，我想谈的是Ms Linda Woo。多年前，当我还是青年时，Linda接受海峡时报采访。如今，我没有当日的新闻报道，但是，我依稀记得她和先生俩人坐在一起微笑的照片。报道讲述患有狼疮病情的她如何和先生相遇结婚。

这种无条件的爱，真的启发年幼的我。这对我而言，是件重要的事物。

几年后，我在报章上又阅读到Linda的报道，这次是关于她患有糖尿病生育！得知红斑狼疮病人依旧能生育后，我倍受鼓舞。

对了，如果你想知道更多关于Linda的事，请看一看我们的DVD - 千变万化的狼疮。

如今，和大家分享我的经历并不是件容易的事。但是在我之前，其他人与大家分享了，她也启发和鼓励我。我希望分享我的经历后能启发更多人。

面临慢性疾病不是件容易的事。很多时候，如我的情况，并不是在于外在的疼痛（我很感激自己没那么多疼痛），而是心理方面。我们很容易陷入自我怜悯当中，或觉得失去人生价值和意义。

但是，当你把视角从自我扩大到他人时，奇迹发生了。你不仅仅更感激自己所拥有的事物，因为你可能拥有更少，你的心情也会改善。

最近，我阅读CNN的报道《幸福来源》。它提到幸福来自两方面：一个是及时行乐；另一个是寻找人生意义，如特里莎修女或达赖喇嘛追求的事。

北卡罗莱纳州大学科学家在80位健康成人中进行两种幸福来源的测试。调查显示，及时行乐的人们有高发炎率，体抗力也弱，和忧郁的人或面临压力的人有相同体质。另一方面，寻找人生意义的人则有低发炎率，体抗力也较强。因此，幸福来自寻找人生意义。

下一次觉得难过时，不凡做一些有意义的事物。那不一定是帮助别人。它可以很简单，如捐赠衣物或在面簿上分享需要帮助的人的信息。这么一来，不仅舒缓疼痛，也能让你意识良好。

希望我分享个人经历给与你们鼓励。

LAS Activities 狼瘡活動

LUPUS SHOWCASE

LAS held a showcase at the TTSH CareConnect on the 30th August 2013. There was a DVD screening and a presentation on SLE. Our volunteers gave out information leaflets and answered public queries. There was also a handicraft session conducted by our volunteer, Rachel Chow, on making butterfly brooches. It was an enjoyable experience for the participants. At the end of the day, we achieved our goal of reaching out to both the lupus sufferers and the public.



狼瘡展覽

8月30日，狼瘡協會在陳篤生醫院進行展覽。當日，有DVD播映和紅斑狼瘡講座。義工們也分發傳單和回答公眾詢問。其中一名義工，Rachel Chow, 也開辦手工藝品時段，制作蝴蝶胸針。這是個愉快的體驗。我們也和狼瘡患友和公眾們交流。



SOCIAL FRIDAY

Our volunteers gathered for a group dinner on the 13th August 2013 at the Peach Garden Restaurant (Novena). Our volunteer, Charmaine Lee, had this to say:

"It was an evening filled with fun and cheer, and of course with much feasting! We enjoyed ourselves tremendously, updating one another our status whilst we dug into the sumptuous dishes that came one after another and topped it up with red wine from Julia (second from left). Our anticipation for future gatherings was rather intense as we proposed and considered several options with eagerness. Soon, we parted with much gladness and well wishes for one another. Looking forward to future meetups and hope more LAS members can join us for future gatherings!"

Special thanks to Irene for being the organiser, and Julia for the big treat. Till we meet again, God bless you all!

星期五聚會

8月13日，義工們在Peach Garden Restaurant (Novena) 聚餐。

其中一名義工，Charmaine Lee，說：“這是個充滿歡樂的傍晚時分。我們一邊吃豐盛的菜肴，一邊喝Julia 請我們喝的紅酒，也和大家交談。我們建議未來舉辦更多的聚會或其他活動。很快的，我們便抱着愉快的心情離開。希望未來有更多聚會，也希望更多狼瘡會員參與！

謝謝Irene策劃這次的聚會，也謝謝Julia請客。我期待下次聚會的時刻！願神父保佑你們！





LAS President's message for Lupus Link

Irene Lim

As I enter the second term at the helm of the association, I reflected on my work with the association for the past two years. Admittedly, I was a reluctant leader at the onset, not that I was disinterested in volunteer and community work but I was rather fearful of adding stress to my hectic work life. Stress is, after all, a major trigger of lupus. I only decided to take up this challenge when my condition was stable and under control. It seemed like an opportune time for me to give back what I benefited from the work of the association. I felt ready to help fellow lupus sufferers, especially the newly diagnosed ones looking for support like I once did. From the time I was diagnosed with lupus, I had recognised self-help as complementary to medications and treatments. It remains my strong belief that with adequate knowledge and understanding of the disease, one can take ownership, better manage the condition, and help oneself. I have never looked back since. I am proud to say that I am doing rather well and living life quite normally in spite of the serious lupus condition when I was first diagnosed. In fact, I am not the only one. Many lupus patients are doing fine as well, thanks to today's improved drugs and treatments, increased awareness of the disease and patient empowerment, self or acquired. There may be no cure for lupus at this point in time but if patients can learn to cope with

the 'minor inconveniences' of having the occasional symptoms like joint pains, headaches, fatigue, etc, take them all in stride and, of course, seek early and necessary treatment when required, they can definitely remain quite well. But make no mistake, we all know lupus can be a serious illness. Some lupus patients do become very ill from complications of the disease from time to time and some even succumb to it. It is sad but true. But what's most disconcerting is that I have come across patients with serious flares due to their own withdrawal of medications against doctor's advice. Invariably, they end up paying a heavy price for it. Worse still, there are also those in denial who refuse or are unable to accept the fact that they have lupus and can't bring themselves to even talk about it. If only they can see that acceptance is an important first step towards the healing process.

Through our LAS Empowerment Talks and various other activities, we strive to empower, motivate and encourage members to lead happy, healthy, and normal lives in spite of lupus through proper medical care and self-help. So let's adopt the proactive self-help approach and keep well, eat healthy, exercise, have adequate rest and stay cheerful! Have a wonderful year ahead!

红斑狼疮协会主席致词

林碯金

進入第二任時期時，我不由得思考過去兩年在狼瘡協會做的事務。我承認開始時不是個自願的領導人，不是因為沒有興趣當義工，而是害怕在繁忙的工作生涯中增添壓力。壓力是個主要刺激狼瘡的因素。因此，當我的病情穩定時，我才決定接受這份挑戰。

我從協會得到很多幫助，是時候回饋了。我想幫助狼瘡病人，尤其是新病患，像我當時尋找支柱。自從患上狼瘡後，我意識到除了藥物治療，自我療程也很重要。我始終相信，一旦有充足的知識，就能舒緩病情。

我很高興的是，當年初診狼瘡病情嚴重，如今我過着正常的生活。我并不是唯一的例子。由于先進的藥物治療和狼瘡意識提高等因素，很多狼瘡病人病情穩定。目前，狼瘡沒有根治的藥物。但是如果病人學會

適應酸痛、頭痛、疲倦等“不便”，以樂觀的心情看待并且盡早治療的話，仍然能過得好好的。

但是，我們必須意識，狼瘡可能是個嚴重的病症。有些狼瘡病人因為狼瘡復發病情惡化。這是不爭的事物。但是，有些病人私下不服用藥物，導致嚴重復發。更甚的是，有些病人拒絕接或無法接受事實，也不想提。其實，接受病情是治療的第一步。

通過狼瘡講座和其他活動，我們希望激發會員們通過藥物治療和自我意識過着一般、健康的生活。因此，大家記得要吃得健康，經常運動，睡眠充足和保持樂觀的心態吧！

希望明年更好！

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Get to know other members of our Association, share information about your health, and be the first to know about the latest activities and events on Facebook! Do you have a question about lupus? Simply email us, so our editorial team may try answering you in the next newsletter.

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