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Behcet's disease: An overview and an update

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Behcet's disease is an inflammatory disorder characterized by multiple system involvements. Oral ulcer is the major clinical finding and diagnostic criteria of the disease. As recurrent aphthous stomatitis affects 10% of the general population, we should keep in mind Behcet's disease in the differential diagnosis. Its prevalence is higher in the countries that ancient Silk Road had passed through once upon a time. The lower incidence seen in the people who migrated from these areas suggests not only genetical factors but also environmental factors play roles for the disease.

There is no pathognomonic or sensitive test for diagnosing Behcet's disease. Even histopathology is not useful. Diagnosis relies on clinical findings. According to International Study Group 1990, recurrent oral ulcers is mandatory for diagnosis and two of the other clinical findings (recurrent genital ulcers, eye lesions, skin lesions and positive pathergy test) must be present. Not only dermatologists and ophthalmologists, but also other specialists should take part in management of these patients because cardiovascular, neurological, gastrointestinal and musculoskeletal systems may all be involved.

None of the treatments result in a cure of the disease. The aim of the treatment is to prevent irreversible damages during active early phase of the disease and to prevent exacerbations of mucocutaneous and joint involvement, usually not causing damage but affecting quality of life. The choice of the treatment mainly depends on the involvement place of the disease. European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR) published evidence based recommendations related to the eye, skin-mucosa disease and arthritis.

Biography

Luna Tanrikulu has completed her medical degree in Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine in 1998 and her dermatology residency in Ondokuz Mayıs University in 2002. She studied with Behcet's disease patients for her thesis. She has been working in Zekai Tahir Burak's Women Health Training and Research Hospital as a consultant dermatologist since 2003. She is aiming to complete her Ph.D. degree for "Basic Biotechnology" in Ankara University in 2015. Dr. Tanrikulu has published many interesting international and national papers since 1993.

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