

Lupus Diagnostic Methods and Treatment

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DESCRIPTION

Lupus, commonly known as autoimmune disease, is a condition in which the body's immune system attacks its tissues and organs. Lupus can cause inflammation in the joints, skin, kidneys, blood cells, brain, heart, and lungs, among other physiological systems. Lupus is difficult to diagnose since its symptoms and signs are commonly mistaken for those of other diseases. A face rash that appears like butterfly wings unfolding over both cheeks is the most distinctive sign of lupus. This rash arises in many cases of lupus, but not all. Some people are susceptible to lupus, which may be brought on by infections, drugs, or even exposure to the sun. Although lupus has no cure, some treatments can help control symptoms. Lupus is difficult to diagnose since symptoms and signs vary so much from person to person. Lupus is not a disease that can be identified with a single test.

Laboratory tests

Laboratory tests usually include blood and urine tests

Complete blood count: This test evaluates the quantity of hemoglobin, a protein found in red blood cells, as well as the number of red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. Another sign of lupus is a reduction in white blood cell or platelet count.

Erythrocyte sedimentation rate: The sedimentation rate of erythrocytes is determined by this test. The red blood cells sediment to the bottom of a tube in an hour. A higher sedimentation rate might suggest a systemic disease like lupus. The person with lupus, or another inflammatory disorder, cancer, have increased sedimentation rate.

Kidney and liver assessment test is used to determine how well kidneys and liver are working. These organs may be affected by lupus.

Urinalysis: If kidneys have been impacted by lupus, an analysis of a sample of urine may reveal. The elevated protein level or red blood cells in the urine confirms the disease.

Antinuclear antibody test: A positive for this test, which is generated by immune system, shows that the immune system is

activated. While the majority of people with lupus have a positive ANA test, there are lots of people who have a positive ANA test doing not have lupus. The doctor may recommend more specific antibody testing if patient test positive for ANA.

Imaging tests: If doctor feels that lupus is damaging the lungs or heart, he or she may recommend the following treatments: X-ray of the chest. Abnormal shadows in the chest picture might indicate fluid or inflammation in the lungs. Echocardiogram is also done. Sound waves are used to create real-time photographs of the beating heart in this exam.

Treatment

Lupus therapy is determined by the signs and symptoms of the patient. When deciding on a patient's therapy and which medications to provide, the doctor should discuss the pros and cons. The doctor may need to change the medications or dosages based on the patient's signs and symptoms. The most often given lupus drugs are as follows:

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs: Edema, pain and fever associated with lupus can be treated with over-the-counter NSAIDs such as ibuprofen (advil, motrin IB, and others) and naproxen sodium (aleve). Stomach bleeding, renal difficulties and an increased risk of heart problems are all possible side effects of NSAIDs.

Antimalarial drugs: Medications like hydroxychloroquine (plaquenil), which are commonly used to treat malaria, impact the immune system and can help reduce the risk of lupus flares. Stomach discomfort and, in rare cases, damage to the retina of the eye are possible side effects. When using these drugs, it's a good idea to get the eyes checked on a regular basis.

Corticosteroids: Prednisone and other corticosteroids can help reduce the inflammation associated with lupus. To treat major kidney and brain diseases, high dosages of steroids, such as methylprednisolone (medrol), are often used. With higher dosages and longer treatment periods, the risk of adverse effects increases.

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Immunosuppressive treatments: In severe forms of lupus, immunosuppressive medicines may be beneficial. Some examples are mycophenolate, azathioprine, cyclosporine, methotrexate, and leflunomide. Possible side effects include liver damage, infection, decreased fertility, and an increased risk of cancer.

Biologics: In some patients, a different form of a drug called belimumab (benlysta) that is given intravenously lowers lupus symptoms. Diarrhea, nausea and infections are some of the side effects. Depression can worsen in rare cases. Rituximab (rituxan, truxima) may be effective for some persons who have failed to respond to prior treatments. Allergic reactions to the intravenous infusion as well as infections are possible side effects.

CONCLUSION

Alternative or complementary medicine is sometimes explored by patients with lupus. There are no alternative therapies that have been proved to change the course of lupus, while some may help to ease the symptoms. Before starting any of these therapies, talk to the doctor. The doctor can assist in analyzing the advantages and hazards of the therapies, as well as warn whether they will cause negative effects with existing lupus medications.