

Lupus in Young Females: Causes and Consequences

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Key points:

- Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE)
- Types of SLE
- Sign and Symptoms of SLE
- Treatment of SLE
- Conclusions

Abstract

The aim of this study is to briefly introduce Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE), its epidemiology, types of lupus, lupus sign and symptoms, diagnosis and management, living a life with lupus, and pregnancy with lupus.

Introduction

Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is defined as a chronic autoimmune disorder that is characterized by a typical multi-organ involvement pattern that is of great significance when it involves vital organs such as the kidney, cardiovascular system, and the central nervous system. SLE is a disease with development that is difficult to predict. The disease affects young people, especially young women.¹

Epidemiology

SLE is nearly 9 times more common in women than men over the life span. Lupus is most common in women ages 15 to 44, or during the years they can have children. Having lupus raises your risk of other health problems.

Types of Lupus

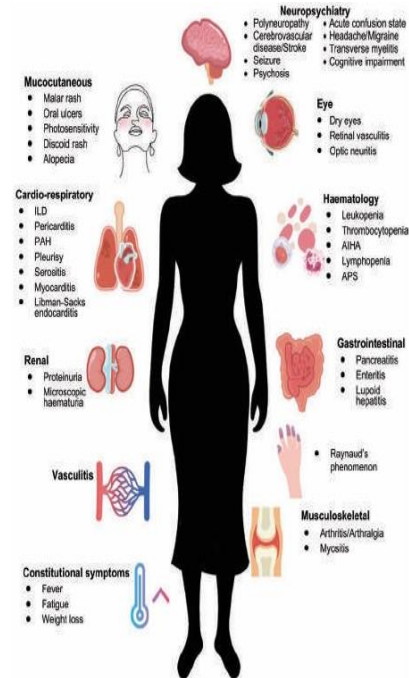
There are four different types of lupus:

- Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is the most common and most serious type of lupus. SLE affects all parts of the body.
- Discoid lupus erythematosus. Which affects only the skin
- Drug-induced lupus, a short-term type of lupus caused by certain medicines
- Neonatal lupus, a rare type of lupus that affect newborn babies²

Signs & Symptoms of lupus

- Muscle and joint pain. You may experience pain and stiffness, with or without swelling. This affects most people with lupus. Common areas for muscle pain and swelling include the neck, thighs, shoulders, and upper arms.
- Fever. A fever higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit affects many people with lupus. The fever is often caused by inflammation or infection. Lupus medicine can help manage and prevent fever.

- Rashes. You may get rashes on any part of your body that is exposed to the sun, such as your face, arms, and hands. One common sign of lupus is a red, butterfly-shaped rash across the nose and cheeks.
- Chest pain. Lupus can trigger inflammation in the lining of the lungs. This causes chest pain when breathing deeply.
- Hair loss. Patchy or bald spots are common. Hair loss could also be caused by some medicines or infection.
- Sun or light sensitivity. Most people with lupus are sensitive to light, a condition called photosensitivity. Exposure to light can cause rashes, fever, fatigue, or joint pain in some people with lupus.
- Kidney problems. Half of people with lupus also have kidney problems, called lupus nephritis.³ Symptoms include weight gain, swollen ankles, high blood pressure, and decreased kidney function.
- Mouth sores. Also called ulcers, these sores usually appear on the roof of the mouth, but can also appear in the gums, inside the cheeks, and on the lips. They may be painless, or you may have soreness or dry mouth.
- Prolonged or extreme fatigue. You may feel tired or exhausted even when you get enough sleep. Fatigue can also be a warning sign of a lupus flare.
- Anemia. Fatigue could be a sign of anemia, a condition that happens when your body does not have red blood cells to carry oxygen throughout your body.
- Memory problems. Some people with lupus report problems with forgetfulness or confusion.
- Blood clotting. You may have a higher risk of blood clotting. This can cause blood clots in the legs or lungs, stroke, heart attack, or repeated miscarriages.
- Eye disease. You may get dry eyes, eye inflammation, and eyelid rashes.



AIHA = autoimmune haemolytic anaemia; APS = antiphospholipid syndrome; ILD = interstitial lung disease; PAH = pulmonary arterial hypertension

Figure 1. Clinical manifestations of SLE⁴

Investigations

The following tests should be done to assist in the diagnosis of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE):

- Full blood count with differential counts
- Renal profile
- Liver function test
- Urinalysis
- Erythrocyte sedimentation rate with/without C-reactive protein
- Antinuclear antibodies and anti-double stranded deoxyribonucleic acid
- Complement 3 and complement
- All patients with SLE should be screened for antiphospholipid antibodies at diagnosis.⁵

Treatment of Lupus

There is no cure for lupus, but treatments can help you feel better and improve your symptoms. Your

treatment will depend on your symptoms and needs.
The goals of treatment are:

- Prevent flares
- Treat symptoms when they happen
- Reduce organ damage and other problems

Your treatment might include medicines to:

- Reduce swelling and pain
- Calm your immune system to prevent it from attacking the organs and tissues in your body
- Reduce or prevent damage to the joints
- Reduce or prevent organ damage. ⁶

Conclusions

Systemic lupus erythematosus represents a systemic multi-organ inflammatory disease that especially affects younger people, and its consequences significantly affect the everyday lives of patients. Symptoms of SLE occur at a young age and lead to early disability. Nearly all patients were on chronic pharmacological treatment. By recent improvements in diagnostics and therapy options, the prognosis for patients with SLE has improved and the impact of this disease on their everyday life has been mitigated. Nevertheless, the impact of this disease on all areas of a patient's life is extensive.

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