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Dr. Prachi Dua

The Inside World Clinic, New
Delhi, Delhi, India

When immunosuppressants don't help: A case report on homoeopathic management of systemic lupus erythematosus

Dr. Prachi Dua

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Abstract

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) is a multisystem disorder, with symptoms affecting the skin, kidneys, joints, lungs, heart and other organs, sometimes all at once. With no particular cause, hence no specific problem to target, modern medicine manages it with immunosuppressants and steroids that come with a number of side effects. Classical homoeopathy offers promising treatment with a single medicine chosen based on all symptoms- physical and mental- that helps improve all the systems without any side effects.

Keywords: Lupus, SLE, homeopathy, classical homoeopathy, treatment

Introduction

SLE is an autoimmune disease, where the immune system starts acting against the body, instead of protecting it. The reported prevalence of SLE ranges from 14 to 60 per 100,000, which is comparatively low for a disease ^[1]. It can be serious to the extent of causing morbidity, and there is still no known cure for it in any system of medicine. Treatment goal is to manage symptoms and help the patient by minimising its complications.

Etiopathogenesis

While the exact cause of SLE is still unknown, patients depict an inflammatory milieu, deposition of immune complexes (ICs) in various organs, and vasculopathy. Genetics, epigenetics, environmental factors, infections, and hormones modulate the disease pathology ^[2].

Common treatment approaches mostly include allopathic Immunosuppressants. Some NSAIDs, Antimalarial drugs, and Corticosteroids are also used during flare ups. The lowered immunity caused by them makes patients more prone to getting other diseases, without even offering a complete cure for SLE.

Case study

The following is a case of a 16 year old girl with lupus, who had a severe photosensitive rash, for which she had to drop out of school. (could later resume it as she got better under homoeopathic medication). There was accompanying joint pain, both systems affected since last 2 years.

Past treatment included steroids, but they were not much helpful, and the rash got triggered each time she was exposed to the sun, and was worse on the feet, hands, and face.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Prachi Dua

The Inside World Clinic, New
Delhi, Delhi, India

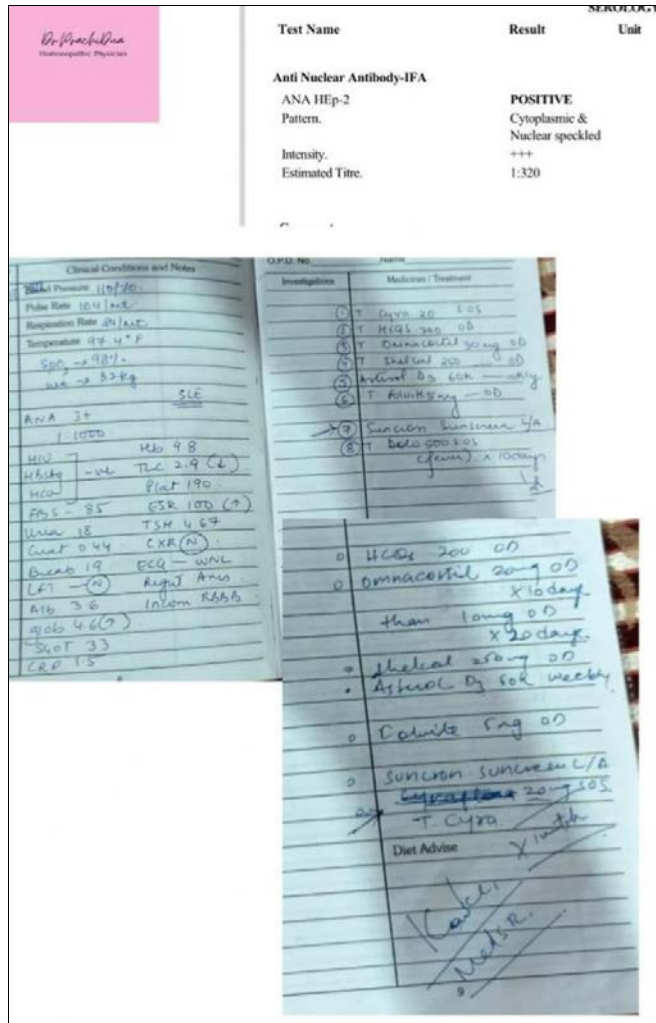


Fig 1: Past treatments (did not help) - Mostly steroids and immunosuppressants

Family history: Tuberculosis- grandparents
 Built: Lean, underweight for her age.
 Marked physical generals
 Perspiration: Scanty/ absent
 Stool: Constipated, nausea during car rides
 Thermal-Chilly: ears, hands and feet extremely cold and need covering Sleep- excessive sleepiness, even during the day.
 Dreams of animals
 Mental/ Emotional symptoms: (Most reported by mother, patient did not speak much) Fears- being alone in the dark, ghosts
 Personality, according to mother
 She likes sharing, doesn't have anything alone Likes pets, loves animals
 Was social earlier, aloof since 2 years, avoids interaction.
 Still desires company, but does not talk at all. Was very talkative earlier. Cries easily- wants mother around.
 Doesn't talk, stays silent and aloof
 Consolation desired, wants attention from people, fears being alone Happy at school, silent at home

Maternal gestational history: It was revealed how the pregnancy was stressful since the mother's in-laws wanted a grandson, and threatened to disown the child, were it a girl. Strong fear of being forsaken stayed in the mother's mind

through the pregnancy, it was evident in the girl after her birth. She needs the mother around at all times, specially when unwell, and is scared of being unwanted, likes socializing and taking care of animals so they are not forsaken. Since she got diagnosed with lupus and got sick, she avoids this social interaction, the main change in her personality.

Also, the mother wanted the child to die in utero, so it would not be forsaken after birth, if it were a girl. And the patient (child) was born with an autoimmune condition where her body keeps trying to harm itself.

Table 1: Repertorial result


CR21 - perspiration; scanty (51)	 <p>Total 32 Rubrics 12 Kingdom</p>
CR21 - generalities; sun; agg. (394)	
CR21 - mind; dreams; animals, of (338)	
CR21 - mind; fear; alone, being; darkness, in (17)	
CR21 - mind; fear; ghosts, spectres, of (72)	
CR21 - stomach; nausea; motion-sickness (137)	
CR21 - mind; company; desire for (239)	
CR21 - mind; consolation, sympathy; desire for (54)	
CR21 - mind; love; animals, for (39)	
CR21 - mind; sympathetic, compassionate, too (171)	
CR21 - skin; lupus (103)	CR21 - perspiration; scanty(51)
CR21 - mind; fear; forsaken, of being (38) :	CR21 - generalities; sun; ... (394)
	CR21 - mind; dreams; an... (338)
	CR21 - mind; fear; alone, b... (17)
	CR21 - mind; fear; ghosts, ... (72)
	CR21 - stomach; nausea; ... (137)
	CR21 - mind; company; ... (239)
	CR21 - mind; consolation, ... (54)
	CR21 - mind; love; animal... (39)
	CR21 - mind; sympathetic... (171)
	CR21 - skin; lupus(103)
	CR21 - mind; fear; forsake... (38)

Table 2: Prescription and follow ups

Date	Follow up	Prescription
3 rd May '23		1. Phosphorus 200- 1 dose- stat. 2. followed by Phosphorus 1M- 1 dose after 15 days.
23 rd May '23	Skin rash was remarkably reduced, there was change in her social avoidance behaviour, she started interacting with relatives and looked happier. (according to mother)	1. Phos LM 2- OD- 1 month
18 th June '23	Follow up- Skin almost cleared up No joint pains Patient talked a little more during follow up than earlier	1. Phos LM 4- OD- 1 month
1 st July '23	No photosensitivity Resumed going to school, could walk in the sun. No rash Some oral aphthae	1. Continued Phos LM 4 as advised earlier 2. Added borax 30- for acute oral aphthae- Borax 30- bd- 3 days
15 th July '23	No aphthae, no other complaints Patient did not come for follow up- there was relief in all symptoms, as reported on call.	1. Phos LM 5- OD- 1 month



Fig 2: Documented evidence





Fig 3: Photosensitive rashes



Fig 4: No steroids/no local applications



Fig 5: Only oral homeopathic medication



Fig 6: The characteristic “butterfly rash” of lupus, disappeared spontaneously. A butterfly rash is typically the result of an immune system response to UV light exposure. Treatments like antimalarial medications and steroids are generally used for it. We used neither of these, nor applied anything on it, nor did the patient use sun protection. Her body stopped reacting abnormally to UV light after getting homeopathic medicine

Conclusion

This case is an important one, since it highlights the importance of a stress-free pregnancy, and the relevance of gestational history in homeopathic case-taking. And how the right homeopathic treatment not just improves the physical symptoms, but restores the normal, stress-free mental

constitution of the patient. While modern medicine does not offer convincing treatment options for lupus, classical homeopathic treatment can prove to be helpful without the side effects of the former.

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