

A 3D anatomical illustration of a human torso, viewed from the back. The spine is highlighted in a bright orange color, while the rest of the skeleton and muscles are rendered in a translucent blue. The background is a dark blue gradient.

**SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS:
A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO
ARTHRITIS OF RHEUMATIC DISEASES**

**Editor:
Syuichi Koarada**

Bentham Books

Frontiers in Arthritis

(Volume 4)

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus: A Systematic Approach to Arthritis of Rheumatic Diseases

Edited by

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Frontiers in Arthritis

Volume # 4

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus: A Systematic Approach to Arthritis of Rheumatic Diseases

Editor: Syuichi Koarada

ISSN (Online): 2468-6670

ISSN (Print): 2468-6662

ISBN (Online): 978-981-5050-65-3

ISBN (Print): 978-981-5050-66-0

ISBN (Paperback): 978-981-5050-67-7

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PREFACE

Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is a chronic multisystem inflammatory connective tissue disease with immunologic abnormalities producing autoantibody, including anti-ds (double strand)-DNA antibodies. In SLE, joint symptoms are the most common and one of the first signs.

The objective of our monograph is to integrate information on musculoskeletal and systemic pathophysiology in SLE. Although SLE is one of the rheumatic diseases, lesions extend not only to joints but to the whole body, causing inflammation in diverse organs, such as the skin, lungs, nervous system, serous membranes, kidneys and virtually all organs of the body. Therefore, patients with SLE have various presentations of disorders of organs. It is necessary to understand the findings of various organs throughout the body for proper diagnosis and treatment of patients with SLE.

Early diagnosis and treatment are required for rheumatic diseases, but early diagnosis is often difficult due to the enormous and diverse findings. Therefore, we are widely advocating a methodology called the ABCDEFGHI method as a comprehensive diagnostic approach based on the clinical, imaging, and immunological characteristics of rheumatic diseases.

The ABCDEFGHI method consists of A (Alignment): malalignment and deformation, B (Bone): bone changes, C (Capsular lesions): cartilage and intra-articular lesions, D (Distribution): four-dimensional altered distribution: 1 intra-articular, 2 intra region, 3 intra-body, 4 timeline, E (Extra-bone): extra-articular soft tissue, F (Further information): further additional medical information, G (Goal): general analysis and diagnosis, I (Integration): integrated and comprehensive diagnosis from the above data and information, H (Heal and Health): treatment and prognosis, and I (Immunological analyzes): immunological interpretations (cytokines and immune cell phenotypes).

It is a method of making a comprehensive diagnosis by individually performing interpretations based on various symptoms, images, laboratory findings, and immunological analysis. This diagnostic procedure is being approved by medical students and evaluated from various fields.

The cases and images of patients with SLE discussed in this book are only a small part of the cases we have experienced. In the future, we would like to consider adding more cases to make the contents more complete. If there are any inadequacies in this book, we would like to receive suggestions from valuable readers. We would also be happy to receive suggestive cases and images from readers so that we can compose even better content.

I dedicate this book to my parents and my beloved Miwako and Sakura.

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CHAPTER 1**Introduction of Diagnostic Approach for Systemic Lupus Erythematosus****Syuichi Koarada^{1,2,3,*} and Yoshifumi Tada³**¹ *Department of Medical Technology and Sciences, International University of Health and Welfare, Okawa, Japan*² *Division of Rheumatology, Takagi Hospital, Okawa, Japan*³ *Division of Rheumatology, Faculty of Medicine, Saga University, Saga, Japan*

Abstract: Musculoskeletal symptoms occur in up to 90% of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) patients. Lesions extend not only to joints but to the whole body, causing inflammation in diverse organs such as the skin, kidneys, lungs, nervous system, serous membranes and virtually across all organs of the body. The ABCDEFGHI method consists of A (Alignment): malalignment and deformation; B (Bone): bone changes; C (Capsular lesions): cartilage and intra-articular lesions; D (Distribution): four dimensional distributions: 1 intra-articular, 2 Intra region, 3 intra-body, 4 timeline; E (Extra-bone): extra-articular soft tissue; F (Further information): further additional medical information; G (Goal): general analysis and integrated, a comprehensive diagnosis from the information; H (Heal and Heath): treatment and prognosis; and I (Immunological analyzes): immunological interpretation (cytokines and phenotypes of immune cells). This chapter outlines a methodology for diagnosing the musculoskeletal and systemic manifestations of SLE.

Keywords: Musculoskeletal symptoms, Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), Systemic manifestations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is a complex and clinically heterogeneous autoimmune disease. Musculoskeletal symptoms occur in up to 90% of SLE patients [1, 2]. Musculoskeletal disorders cause disabling symptoms in 70% of patients [3].

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Despite being one of the most common symptoms, medical and basic researchers do not always pay the utmost attention to musculoskeletal symptoms. Joint symptoms may be neglected in SLE because systemic, cutaneous, and organ lesions are more prominent.

Both directly and indirectly, musculoskeletal symptoms affect patient quality of life (QOL), causing immobility and frailty. Ultimately, the musculoskeletal symptoms have a significant effect on the prognosis of the musculoskeletal system due to osteoporosis, compression fractures, necrosis of the femoral heads, and are irreversible.

Suppose patients with SLE are not diagnosed early. In that case, treatment may be delayed, the lesions and disorders will persist, and delayed diagnosis is often the cause of impaired patient quality of life.

Patients with rheumatoid arthritis always have joint radiography performed at the first visit and on regular examinations thereafter. On the other hand, in SLE patients, even if they have joint symptoms/deformities, radiography of the joints may not always be taken. It is the patient's desire to relieve the pain without using glucocorticoids in the treatment with more attention to lupus arthritis and musculoskeletal symptoms. SLE is a systemic disease, but it is important to recognize that SLE is also a joint disease.

Musculoskeletal involvement is one of the most common manifestations of SLE and is present in 69-95% of lupus patients [4 - 9]. Moreover, joint symptoms are frequently one of the earliest manifestations. Many patients with SLE can develop non-erosive arthritis. Joint lesions range from mild to severe, but clinically and historically, joint symptoms of SLE, including joint pain or arthritis, have usually been considered transient, mild, or moderate [10].

Arthritis in SLE is very important symptomatology, as 58% of patients have active musculoskeletal lesions even at relapse in one cohort study [10]. Historically, in 1872, Kaposi identified SLE arthritis and reported that joint lesions were a precursor to the more severe symptoms of lupus.

However, most researchers did not adequately study arthritis in SLE as a milder symptom compared to systemic symptoms. Even now, in daily practice, joint symptoms in SLE may be milder. Furthermore, it has been reported that arthralgia is one of the most influential symptoms on the quality of daily life from the perspective of the patient [11, 12]. Because it has been shown that joint involvement deeply impacts on quality of life in SLE patients [11]. Recently, many studies have shown that joint deformities also occur in SLE patients,

causing erosive arthritis, the so-called rhupeus syndrome, in up to 15% and Jaccoud's arthropathy [10, 13 - 16]. Musculoskeletal ultrasonography and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) have become useful tools in assessing patients with arthritis.

Surprisingly, these new imaging techniques have shown articular involvement of SLE in an unexpected higher prevalence [12]. The evaluation of various forms of lupus arthropathy with clinical and laboratory functions and images, including conventional radiography, musculoskeletal ultrasound, MRI, and other modalities, is described. In addition, images of musculoskeletal lesions are used to determine overlap with other diseases, rheumatoid arthritis (RA), spondyloarthritis, vasculitis syndrome, fractures, septic arthritis, and osteomyelitis. To diagnose lupus arthropathy, it is necessary to perform and interpret typical conventional and other diagnostic imaging.

The cause of the disease is still unknown. Genetic, hormonal, and environmental factors are thought to play important roles in the pathophysiology of SLE. Multiple genes show genetic susceptibility to SLE. Environmental factors such as ultraviolet (UV) light, viral infections, female gender, and exposure to estrogen-containing drugs induce SLE.

This book will serve as a useful reference in clinical and radiological diagnosis.

2. CLASSIFICATION OF LUPUS ARTHROPATHY

Arthropathy of SLE is clinically extremely diverse. There are two indicating categories: 1) non-erosive or erosive, and 2) non-deformable or deformable. However, it is clinically useful to divide into three categories: non-specific arthritis, non-erosive arthropathy (Jaccoud's arthritis), and erosive arthritis (rhupeus) [17]. Moreover, lupus arthropathy is clinically highly diverse and can be divided into at least six clinical forms.

Musculoskeletal abnormalities in SLE patients have tremendous clinical variability and include myositis, fasciitis, symmetric arthritis, non-erosive degenerative arthritis, spontaneous tendon rupture, soft tissue calcification, osteomyelitis, septic arthritis, terminal phalangeal sclerosis, erosion, and osteonecrosis (Table 1).

Alignment of Musculoskeletal System in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

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Abstract: Abnormalities of joint alignment in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) are characterized by subluxation or dislocation without erosion. Hand deformities (“lupus hands”) in SLE patients include ulnar deviation, swan neck deformity, and thumb Z deformity. However, abnormalities in alignment are widespread and can occur in the wrists, shoulders, hips, knees, toes, and spine. Osteonecrosis and fracture can also occur as alignment abnormalities. In addition, rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and other complications such as scleroderma and inflammatory myositis may also occur, making the alignment abnormalities complex. An understanding of alignment abnormalities in SLE is helpful in diagnosing the condition of the disease and establishing a treatment strategy. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of alignment abnormalities in SLE from various perspectives.

Keywords: Hand deformities, Joint alignment, Lupus hands, Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).

1. INTRODUCTION

Abnormalities of alignment in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) (category “A”) are typically characterized by subluxation or dislocation without erosions. However, alignment abnormalities in late arthropathy include severe erosive deformities of the joints, such as rheumatoid arthritis combined with SLE called rhupeus. In some cases, severe arthritis with erosive and deforming changes occurs and is clinically indistinguishable from RA.

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The typical alignment abnormality in SLE is Jaccoud's arthropathy is a reversible change. However, fixed deformities of joint changes can also occur in SLE. Hand deformities ("lupus hands") include ulnar deviation, boutonniere deformities, swan neck deformities, and thumb Z deformities.

However, abnormalities in alignment are widespread and can occur in the wrists, shoulders, hips, knees, toes, and spine. Osteonecrosis and fracture lesions can also occur as alignment abnormalities in SLE. In addition, rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and other complications such as scleroderma and inflammatory myositis may also occur. They make the alignment abnormalities in SLE complex. An understanding of alignment abnormalities in SLE is helpful in diagnosing the condition of the disease and establishing a treatment strategy. The objectives of this chapter are to provide a visual overview of alignment abnormalities in SLE from various perspectives.

2. NON-EROSIVE ARTHROPATHY, JACCOUD'S ARTHROPATHY

Deformities of the hands in patients with SLE include ulnar deviation, swan neck deformities, and Z deformities of the thumbs. In Jaccoud's arthropathy, hand deformities can be reduced and do not cause severe functional disability. Therefore, in the posterior-anterior (PA) view of a conventional radiograph, the technicians carefully position the digits, and the mispositioning may disappear. However, some patients may have chronic fixed deformities due to Jaccoud's arthropathy and rhyphus (SLE and rheumatoid arthritis) [1].

Jaccoud *et al.* described Jaccoud's arthropathy as characterized by muscular atrophy, ulnar deviation, and flexion of the MCP joints in a patient with rheumatic fever (RF) [2].

Although classically described for rheumatic fever, Jaccoud's arthropathy also occurs in some connective tissue diseases such as SLE, systemic sclerosis, polymyositis/dermatomyositis, vasculitis, other infectious diseases, and neoplastic conditions.

In Jaccoud's arthropathy, the severe deformity can mimic rheumatoid arthritis, although erosions are absent. However, in Jaccoud's arthropathy, it is important that the deformities of the joints can be reversed by physical examination.

Bywaters reported a similar case in 1950 and reviewed European literature suggesting that Jaccoud's arthropathy can be distinguished from rheumatoid arthritis. In 1963, Twigg and Smith disseminated the concept by radiologically presenting the findings of Jaccoud's arthropathy observed in two patients at

Georgetown University Hospital. In 1869, Jaccoud first described Jaccoud's arthropathy [2].

Subluxations and/or dislocations of the MCP joints in SLE patients are observed in plain radiographs of the hands. Minor subluxations of the MCP and PIP joints of the digits are found in the plain radiographs of the restored same hands by radiographers. In Jaccoud's arthropathy, the deformities of the hands are reducible and do not cause severe functional disability compared to rheumatoid arthritis. Most patients with Jaccoud's arthropathy can easily correct the deformities on their own in their daily lives.

Unless otherwise instructed, the deformities may disappear in routine radiography as the radiologist carefully repairs the hand deformities. Therefore, it may be necessary to instruct the radiologist to take the image slightly away from the imaging surface in order to evaluate the deformation.

3. CHRONIC FIXED DEFORMITIES

Some patients of SLE have chronic fixed deformities.

4. MECHANISM OF DEFORMITIES OF JOINTS

The mechanism of joint deformities in arthropathy of SLE is caused by the laxity of the joint capsules and ligaments, contractures, and muscular imbalance.

5. HANDS

The main findings of plain radiography are swan-neck deformities, subluxations of the thumbs, ulnar deviation of the metacarpophalangeal (MCP) joints, Z-thumbs, contractures, tendon ruptures, and buttonhole deformities, but there are no signs of bone erosions.

5.1. Deformities of Metacarpophalangeal Joints

Changes in the digits of lupus arthritis show various deformities and deviations of the metacarpophalangeal (MCP) joints. These include ulnar deviation, extensor tendon subluxations, palmar subluxations, and flexion of the joints.

Bone Lesions of Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

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Abstract: Category “B” is a description of bone changes in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). Bone lesions in most patients with SLE show only mild changes, including periarticular osteopenia, without erosions or deformities. Therefore, joint and bone destruction is rarely seen. However, bone changes may be evident in some patients with Jaccoud’s arthropathy and rhusus. Bone changes include a wide variety of lesions such as bone erosions, bone cysts, osteophytes, and avascular osteonecrosis. The findings of category B are important in the pathophysiology and diagnosis of SLE. Bone lesions of SLE are outlined graphically in this chapter.

Keywords: Avascular osteonecrosis, Bone cysts, Bone erosions, Osteophytes, Periarticular osteopenia, Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).

1. INTRODUCTION

Usually, radiographs in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) show only mild signs of bone changes. Synovium is the target of SLE, same as rheumatoid arthritis, although erosive structural damage is rare. However, osseous and cartilaginous alterations become evident in some patients with lupus arthropathy [1]. Bone changes in SLE include periarticular osteopenia, generalized osteoporosis, osteosclerosis, erosions, cystic changes, osteophytes, avascular osteonecrosis, and bone infarcts.

2. BONE MINERALIZATION

2.1. Periarticular (Juxta-articular) Osteoporosis

Juxta-articular (periarticular) osteoporosis or osteopenia is one of the prominent

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radiographic abnormalities of the bone (category “B”) in SLE. In SLE, juxta-articular osteoporosis and/or soft tissue swelling are often the only findings of radiographs.

Also, juxta-articular osteoporosis, regional osteoporosis, is one of the earliest changes in arthritis of SLE. However, the degree of periarticular osteoporosis varies and is observed in various joints such as the hands and wrists (Figs. 1 - 6), elbows, shoulders, knees, ankles, and toes.



Fig. (1). PA view of the hands in a patient with SLE shows mild periarticular osteoporosis of the MCP joints.



Fig. (2). PA view of the hands in a female with SLE shows mild periarticular osteoporosis of the DIP, IP, PIP, MCP, and carpal joints.



Fig. (3). PA view of the hands in a female with SLE shows moderate periarticular osteoporosis of the DIP, IP, PIP, MCP, and carpal joints.



Fig. (4). Oblique view of the hands in a female with SLE shows moderate periarticular osteoporosis of the DIP, IP, PIP, MCP, and carpal joints.



Fig. (5). PA view of the hands in a female with SLE shows severe periarticular osteoporosis of the DIP, IP, PIP, MCP and carpal joints.

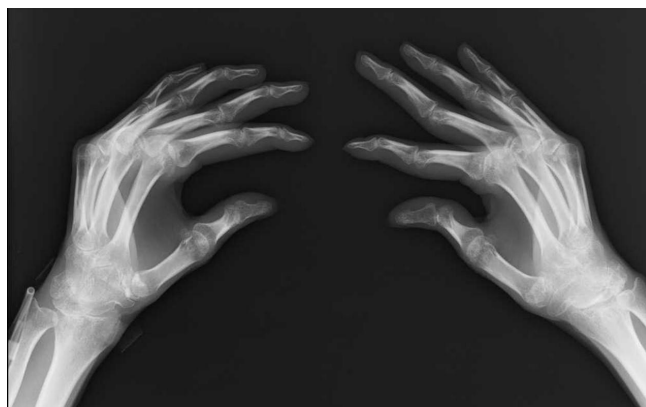


Fig. (6). Oblique view of the hands in a female with SLE shows severe periarticular osteoporosis of the DIP, IP, PIP, MCP and carpal joints.

Cartilaginous and Capsular Changes in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

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Abstract: Cartilaginous and capsular lesions in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), such as diffuse joint space narrowing (JSN) and synovial proliferation, are usually mild. Erosions and pressure cause destruction of cartilages in SLE due to misalignment of joint structures. However, cartilage changes and synovial proliferation are seen in lupus arthropathy. Especially in rhupus, which is thought to be a complication of rheumatoid arthritis, cartilaginous and synovial changes are significant findings. Joint effusions and intra-articular calcifications may also be seen. This chapter will focus on intra-articular lesions, category “C” in SLE.

Keywords: Capsular changes, Cartilaginous changes, Joint effusions, Joint space narrowing, Synovial proliferation, Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).

1. INTRODUCTION

In systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), joint space narrowing (JSN) is not common except for rhupus, which coexists with rheumatoid arthritis. Cartilage destruction can be caused by erosions and pressure from abnormal joint construction. However, in some cases of lupus arthropathy, cartilage and bone changes can be evident. Especially in rhupus (SLE and rheumatoid arthritis), cartilaginous and synovial changes are significant findings. Joint effusions and intra-articular calcifications may also be seen. In this chapter intra-articular lesions, category “C” in SLE is illustrated and discussed.

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2. SYNOVITIS

In the joints of patients with SLE, there is hypertrophy of the synovial membranes and edema of joint capsules.

2.1. Jaccoud's Arthropathy

Jaccoud's arthropathy is one of the major causes of synovitis [1]. Ultrasound findings of synovitis include intra-capsular synovial proliferation (hypertrophic synovial tissue), joint effusions (intra-articular anechoic or hypoechoic fluid collection), capsular distention, and positive power Doppler signals (hyperemia, increased local perfusion). Gabba reported that synovitis was present in 25% of patients with joint effusions and/or synovial proliferation with or without power Doppler signals [2]. The presence of power Doppler signals was found in the joints of 17% of patients [2].

2.2. DIP Joints (Figs. 1 - 3)



Fig. (1). Swelling of the DIP joints of bilateral third digits in a patient with SLE.



Fig. (2). Swelling of the DIP joints of the digits in a patient with SLE.

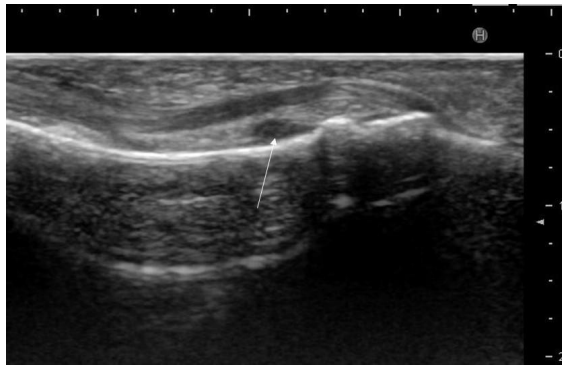


Fig. (3). Palmar longitudinal ultrasound image of the DIP joint of the third digit in a patient with SLE showing synovial hypertrophy (arrow).

2.3. IP Joints (Figs. 4 - 5)

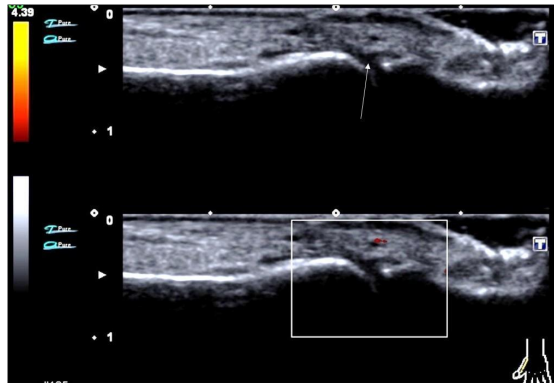


Fig. (4). Dorsal longitudinal ultrasound images of the IP joint of the first digit in a patient with SLE show minimal synovial hypertrophy without power Doppler signals.

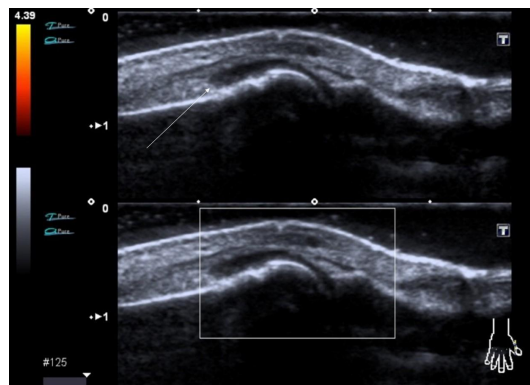


Fig. (5). Dorsal longitudinal ultrasound images of the IP joint of the first digit in a patient with SLE showing moderate synovial hypertrophy without power Doppler signals.

Distribution, Pattern of Joint Involvement in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

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Abstract: There are four concepts of distribution of joint and tendon lesions in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE): general distribution, regional distribution, intra-articular distribution, and timeline. Usually, joint lesions in SLE are symmetrically, bilaterally, and multiply distributed. However, the distribution varies from case to case. The distribution of the lesions can be ascertained by using bone scintigraphy and gallium scintigraphy. The distribution of the lesions is very important information for the diagnosis of SLE.

Keywords: Distribution of musculoskeletal lesions, General distribution, Intra-articular distribution, Regional distribution, Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), Timeline.

1. INTRODUCTION

The target area approach is a concept and a method that is useful for radiographic evaluation of rheumatic diseases. The distribution of joint involvement in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is symmetric and has bilateral polyarthritis [1].

In SLE, joint lesions can occur anywhere [2]. However, the most affected joints in SLE are the metacarpal phalangeal (MCP) joints, proximal interphalangeal (PIP) joints, distal interphalangeal (DIP) joints interphalangeal (IP) joints of the thumbs, wrists, and knees (Fig. 1) [1 - 4]. Lupus arthritis occurs less often on the shoulders, feet, and elbows [2].

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Distribution of arthropathy in SLE

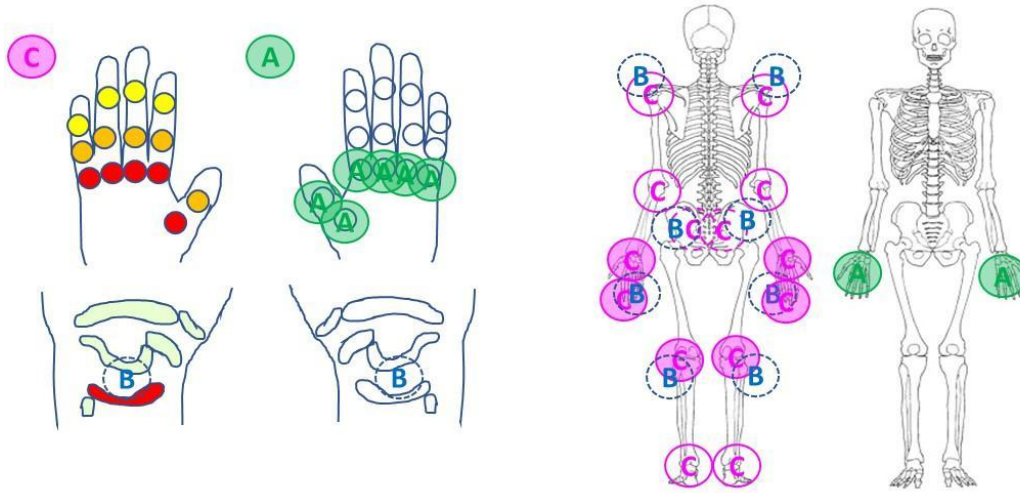


Fig. (1). Distribution of arthropathy in SLE.

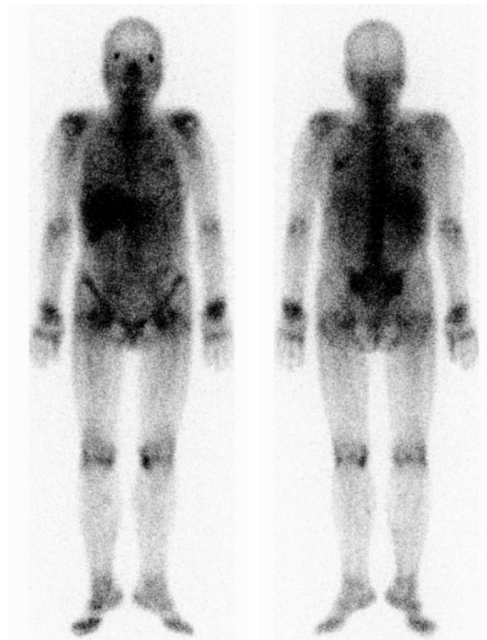


Fig. (2). Gallium scintigraphy can well represent the distribution of severe polyarthritis of the large and small joints in SLE.

1.1. Gallium Scintigraphy (Figs. 2 - 8)

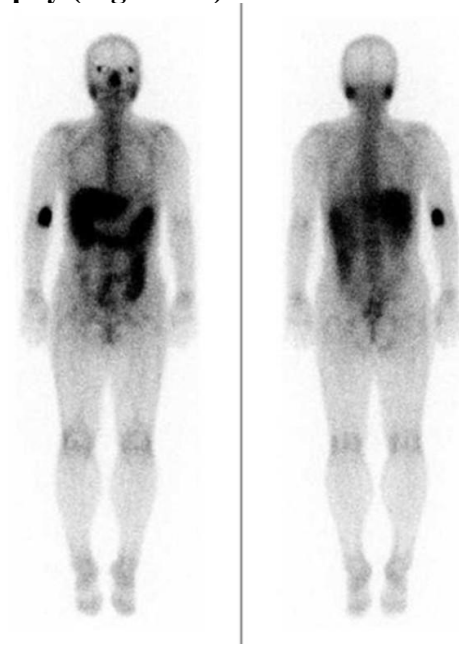


Fig. (3). Gallium scintigraphy shows the distribution of moderate polyarthritis of the large and small joints in SLE.

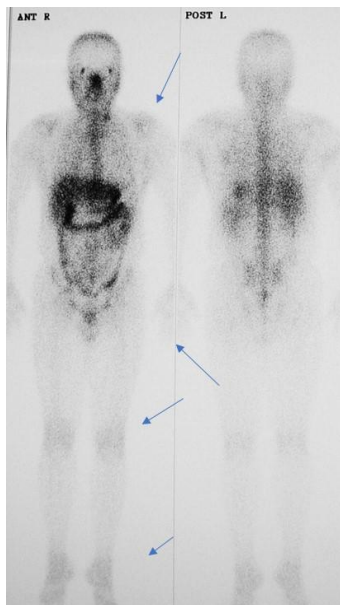


Fig. (4). Gallium scintigraphy shows the distribution of mild polyarthritis of the large and small joints in SLE.

CHAPTER 6

Extra-Articular Soft Tissue and Muscular Involvement in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

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Abstract: Soft tissue lesions in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) include various lesions such as subcutaneous edema, synovitis of the joint, edema of the joint capsule, tenosynovitis, tendon rupture, muscular, and vascular involvement. The synovium of bursa is also affected. Ultrasound and MRI are especially important for the evaluation of soft tissue lesions because of the low sensitivity of conventional radiography. The soft tissue lesions of SLE are diverse and widespread, and understanding their pathophysiology can help diagnose whether the lesions are of SLE origin or a complication of other factors. Knowing the soft tissue lesions of SLE can also help us to deal with the wide variety of lesions in SLE patients. In this article, we summarize the variety of extra-articular soft tissue lesions.

Keywords: Bursitis, Edema, Peritenon extensor tendon inflammation (PTI), Soft tissue lesions, Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), Tenosynovitis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Soft tissue lesions in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) include various lesions such as subcutaneous edema, synovitis of the joint, edema of the joint capsule, tenosynovitis, tendon rupture, muscular, bursitis, and vascular involvement. Ultrasound and MRI are useful for the evaluation of soft tissue lesions. Knowing the soft tissue lesions of SLE can also help us to deal with the wide variety of lesions in SLE patients.

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Joint swelling is due to the growth of synovial tissue and / or synovial fluid. Soft tissue swelling associated with arthritis is more accurately an intracapsular finding and should be included in category “C”, but in clinical practice it is often accompanied by inflammation of the soft tissue around the joints. Therefore, the finding also belongs to the category “E” as soft tissue swelling due to arthritis of systemic lupus erythematosus. In most of patients with SLE, soft tissue swelling, and periarticular osteoporosis are usually the only radiographic findings.

Soft tissue swelling of the joints is present in SLE but is less pronounced than in rheumatoid arthritis. As a result of increased intra-articular fluid, synovial hypertrophy, and thickening of adjacent soft tissues, the joints swollen in fusiform or spindle shapes.

2. PERIPHERAL SOFT TISSUE SWELLING

In patients with SLE, periarticular soft tissue swelling, swelling of soft tissue around the joints, is seen at various sites. Periarticular soft tissue swelling varies depending on the underlying condition of each SLE patient.

2.1. Hand (Figs. 1 - 15)

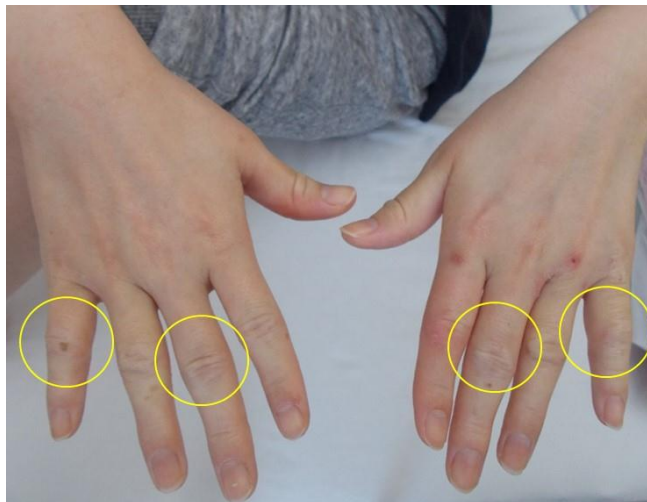


Fig. (1). Fusiform soft tissue swelling in the hands of a patient with SLE. Photograph of the hands shows soft tissue swelling at the PIP joints of a patient with non-deforming non-erosive (NDNE) lupus arthropathy.



Fig. (2). Joint swelling of the DIP joints in a patient with SLE.



Fig. (3). Joint swelling of the DIP and PIP joints of the left fourth digit in a patient with SLE and scleroderma.



Fig. (4). Enlarged image of the previous figure. Joint swelling of the DIP and PIP joints of the left fourth digit in a patient with SLE and scleroderma.

Skin Manifestations in Patients with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

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Abstract: Skin manifestations are one of the most common presenting symptoms in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). Skin lesions are seen in more than 80% of patients with SLE at some point during the disease and are also the initial manifestations. The skin manifestations of SLE are varied. Skin lesions of SLE include lupus malar rash, maculopapular lupus rashes, palmar erythemas, bullous rashes, subacute cutaneous lupus erythematosus, chilblain lupus and discoid rashes. These skin lesions can be classified as acute, subacute, and chronic lesions. Specific skin lesions are important for the diagnosis of SLE. This review will outline and illustrate the skin lesions of SLE.

Keywords: Chilblain lupus, Discoid rashes, Maculopapular rashes, Malar rash, Palmar erythema, Subacute cutaneous erythematosus, Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).

1. INTRODUCTION

Skin symptoms are one of the most common manifestations of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). Various lesions of the skin and mucous membranes are often found in more than 80% of SLE patients at some point during the disease. The symptoms of the skin in SLE are diverse [1]. Importantly, cutaneous symptoms are the first signs of SLE in up to 25% of cases [1].

The American College of Rheumatology (ACR)-SLE classification criteria and the Systemic Lupus International Collaborating Clinics (SLICC) classification criteria include mucocutaneous signs and are used for the SLE classification.

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SLE is associated with a wide range of oral mucosal lesions, including cheilitis, erythematous patches, “honeycomb” plaques, discoid lesions, lichen planus-like lesions, and discrete ulcers.

In 1979, Sontheimer *et al.* classified cutaneous lesions of LE based on their morphologic features and duration [2]. They classified the lesions into three types: the chronic type, which is typical of discoid lupus erythematosus (DLE); the acute type, which is fixed and scarring lupus erythematosus (LE) and in severe SLE; and recurrent, superficial, non-scarring LE was classified as subacute cutaneous lupus erythematosus (SCLE). SCALE is classified into papulo-squamous type and annular-polycyclic type.

Specific skin lesions of SLE are classified into acute, subacute, and chronic types and further into localized, disseminated, and generalized [3]. These specific skin lesions are important for the definitive diagnosis of SLE, and if present, at least a diagnosis of LE can be made. More than one type of skin lesion is often seen in the same patients. LE with an acute type of rashes is usually the lesions of SLE. Although significant improvements have recently been performed in the classification of skin lesions in SLE, there are some major limitations due to differences in terminology depending on the classification criteria [1].

2. ACUTE CUTANEOUS LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS (ACLE)

Butterfly erythema, butterfly rash, or lupus malar rash, is the most common skin rash in acute cutaneous lupus erythematosus (ACLE); however, there is also a skin rash of similar significance on the hands. LE with these types of skin rashes is usually associated with systemic symptoms of SLE. ACLE includes lupus malar rash, bullous lupus, toxic epidermal necrolysis variant of SLE, maculopapular lupus rash, and a photosensitive lupus rash.

2.1. Lupus Malar Rash

Patients with acute cutaneous lupus erythematosus (ACLE) have classic malar or butterfly rash, which is a flat or raised fixed erythema over the malar eminences and tends to preserve the nasolabial folds. The butterfly rash is the most common and well-known skin lesion in SLE patients.

Regarding the distributions of rashes, erythemas are on the cheeks and bridge of the nose but not on the nasolabial folds. The rashes may also appear around the mouth and on the forehead. The rashes may have erythema at the bridge of the nose (butterfly rash) or may not (malar rash). Butterfly rash is rarely formed on the apex of the nose, but it may be seen with photosensitivity. It may be accompanied by erythema of the palpebral superior. In addition, ACLE can cause

lesions on the chin, earlobes, scalp, and neck. Skin lesions of ACLE may be accompanied by erosions and ulcers of the oral and/or nasal mucosa.

Malar rash often appears after exposure to sunlight. Butterfly rash may occur transiently and be the first sign of SLE, which can precede the onset by weeks or months. Butterfly rash can persist for months without systemic lesions.

Facial rashes are characterized by small, discrete erythematous macules, papules, and plaques, or widespread congestive erythemas. Lesions of malar rash become confluent and have scales, erosions, and crusting, but may also be accompanied by dermatitis, ulcers, and blisters.

At the first visit, it may be necessary to distinguish it from parvovirus infection, but parvovirus-induced rashes are transient. Since childhood, some healthy people have always had red cheeks, but they are not pathological findings. Sometimes, severe facial edema resembling dermatomyositis may occur [4]. Although erythemas of the upper eyelids may resemble dermatomyositis, it is possible to distinguish by general findings other than rashes. Conversely, dermatomyositis may cause butterfly rash; however, if they do not meet the classification criteria for SLE, including serum data and symptoms, they should be diagnosed as rashes due to dermatomyositis. Erythemas of the anguli oculi medialis are characteristic of dermatomyositis rather than SLE. In patients with SLE, in contrast to dermatomyositis, lesions usually do not occur in the nasolabial folds and periorbital regions.

2.1.1. Typical Malar Rash (Figs. 1 - 3)



Fig. (1). Malar rash on the cheeks of a patient with SLE. Facial rashes are accompanied by erythema at the base of the nose. The butterfly distribution is typical, sparing the nasolabial folds and orbital regions.

Respiratory Involvement in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

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Abstract: Respiratory lesions in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) are relatively common. Pleurisy (pleuritis) is a frequent pulmonary disease in SLE. Sometimes interstitial pneumonia (IP, lupus pneumonia), alveolar hemorrhage, and pulmonary infarction are seen. Pleurisy is usually mild but can sometimes be a severe refractory disease. Interstitial lung disease includes acute IP due to SLE and chronic pulmonary fibrosis. Diaphragmatic dysfunction is also seen. Some cases become chronic after acute lupus pneumonia. Alveolar hemorrhage can be a cause of death depending on the degree. Pulmonary infarction is not uncommon in SLE. This chapter provides an overview of respiratory involvement in SLE.

Keywords: Diaphragmatic dysfunction, Diffuse alveolar hemorrhage (DAH), Lupus pneumonitis, Pleuritis, Respiratory involvement, Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).

1. INTRODUCTION

Respiratory lesions are relatively common in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) [1]. Between 40% to 57% of patients have symptoms of dyspnea and decreased exercise tolerance [2]. These respiratory symptoms result from pulmonary dysfunction due to lung lesions in SLE. The secondary pulmonary lesions are from infections and other organ lesions such as renal failure [1]. Pleural, lung, and respiratory muscle lesions can occur due to SLE, all of which cause respiratory dysfunction [1].

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Pleuritis frequently occurs in SLE. Lung lesions, sometimes interstitial pneumonitis (lupus pneumonitis), alveolar hemorrhage, and pulmonary infarction may be observed.

2. PLURA

2.1. Pleural Effusions

Pleural effusion is the most common symptom of SLE in the respiratory system and is bilateral in approximately half of the patients [3]. Pleural effusion in SLE is generally small and exudative but contains lupus erythematosus cells, immune complexes, and anti-DNA antibodies [1]. Pleural effusion may also be secondary to pulmonary infarction, infection, and congestive heart failure [4]. To distinguish between transudative and exudative pleural effusions is required when they have pleural effusion.

2.1.1. Imaging Findings

2.1.1.1. Conventional Chest Radiography (Figs. 1 - 4)

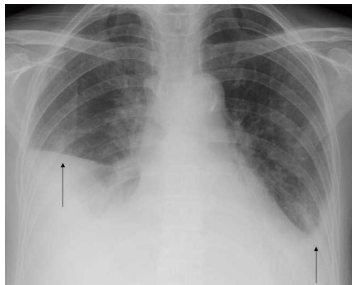


Fig. (1). Extensive bilateral pleural effusions (arrow) are seen on chest radiograph, PA view, of a patient with SLE, worsening on the right side.

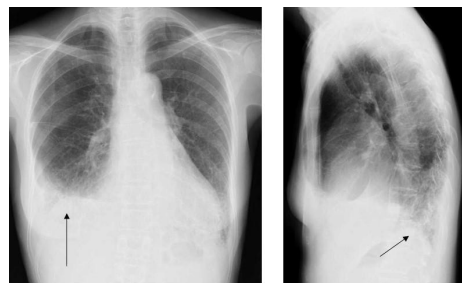


Fig. (2). Chest radiographs (Left panel: PA view, right panel: lateral view) showing moderate pleural effusion in the right lung field in a patient with SLE.

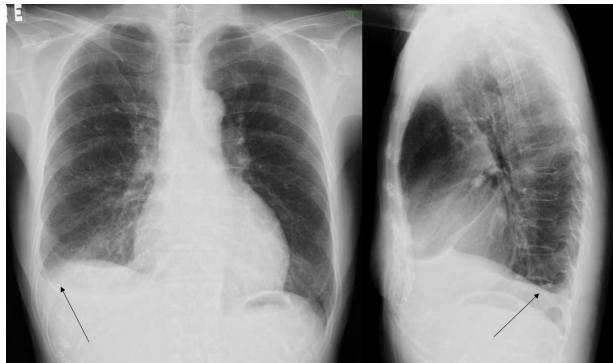


Fig. (3). Chest radiographs (left panel: PA view, right panel: lateral view) of a patient with SLE demonstrate right small pleural effusion.

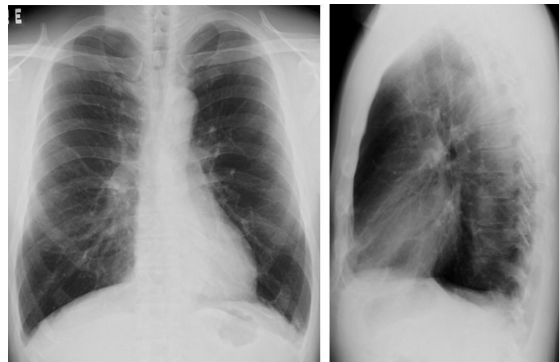


Fig. (4). Chest radiographs, PA, and lateral views, of a patient with SLE demonstrating bilateral mild pleural effusions.

2.1.1.2. Chest CT (Fig. 5)

Chest CT shows pleural effusions, pleural thickening, and subjacent atelectasis [5].



Fig. (5). Axial CT image of the chest of a patient with SLE demonstrates right pleural effusion (arrow).

Neuropsychiatric Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (NP-SLE)

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Abstract: Neuropsychiatric systemic lupus erythematosus (NP-SLE) is one of the most serious organ complications of SLE, affecting health, quality of life, and prognosis of life in patients with SLE. Neurological symptoms are various. Among the pathological conditions of SLE, those including neurologic syndromes of the central nervous system, peripheral nervous system, and diffuse psychiatric and neuropsychiatric syndrome are called NP-SLE in the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) nomenclature. In NP-SLE, such a variety of pathophysiology should be considered when selecting a treatment. In this article, we describe the neurological lesions of SLE with illustrations.

Keywords: Cerebral atrophy, Diffuse cerebral edema, Neuropsychiatric-SLE (NP-SLE), Posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome, Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).

1. INTRODUCTION

Neuropsychiatric (NP) systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) occurs in 30% to 80% of SLE patients. Neurological symptoms are various. Among the pathological conditions of SLE, those including neurologic syndromes of the central nervous system, peripheral nervous system, and diffuse psychiatric and neuropsychiatric syndrome are called NP-SLE in the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) nomenclature [1]. The ACR Nomenclature for NPSLE provides case definitions for 19 neuropsychiatric syndromes seen in SLE, with

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reporting standards and recommendations for laboratory and imaging tests. However, glucocorticoids and some immunosuppressants for the treatment of SLE can induce psychosis, depression, anxiety, and mania. NP-SLE is primarily caused by angiopathy, direct neuro-autoimmune damage, demyelination, and thromboembolism. To complicate matters, antiphospholipid antibody syndrome in SLE patients can induce thromboembolic events. Arterial thromboembolism can cause stroke, seizures, and diffuse cognitive impairment.

2. CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

2.1. Cerebral Atrophy (Figs. 1 - 2)

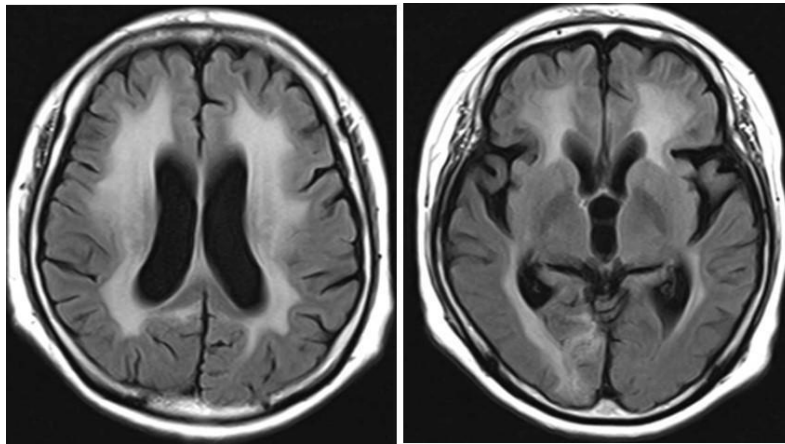


Fig. (1). Axial MRI images of the brain show age-inappropriate frontal and parietal lobe severe atrophy in a young female patient with longstanding SLE.

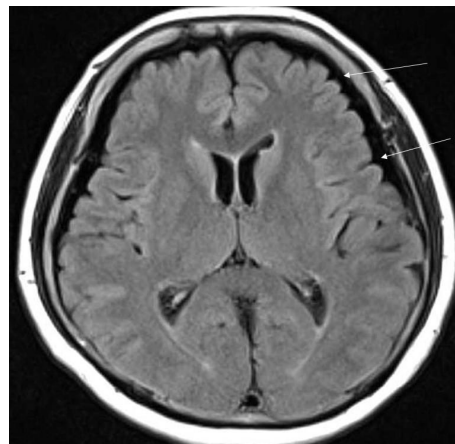


Fig. (2). Axial MRI image of the brain shows mild cerebral atrophy in a patient with SLE.

Cerebral atrophy is one of the most common abnormalities in 8.7-32% of patients with SLE [2 - 5]. Cerebral atrophy is more likely to occur in SLE patients with a long history, history of cerebral ischemia, and cognitive impairment.

2.2. Diffuse Cerebral Edema with Leukoencephalopathy (Figs. 3 - 6)

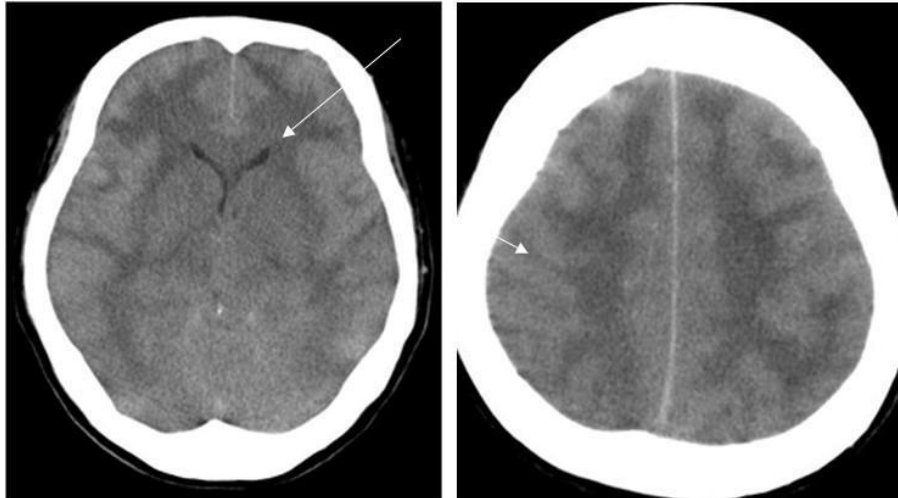


Fig. (3). Diffuse cerebral edema with leukoencephalopathy in a patient with SLE. Axial head CT scans showing severe brain edema, reduction of cerebral ventricles, and disappearance of cerebral sulci.

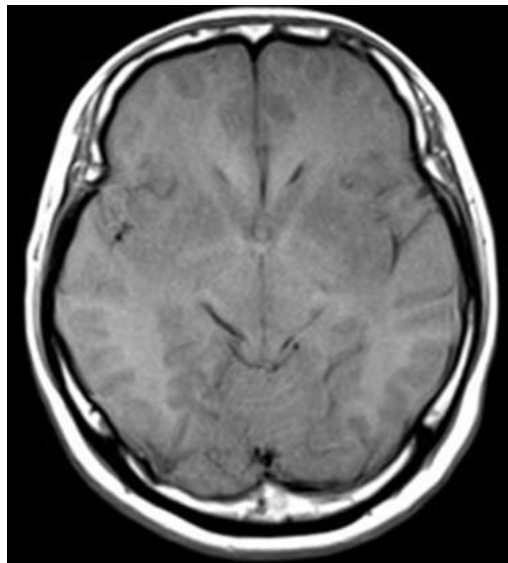


Fig. (4). T1-weighted brain MRI of a patient with SLE showing cerebral edema.

Cardiovascular and Renal Diseases in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

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Abstract: Cardiovascular disease occurs in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). Cardiovascular diseases are important in SLE. Cardiovascular diseases involve the myocardium, pericardium, cardiac valves, and coronary arteries. Pericarditis is often accompanied by pleurisy, tachycardia, and cardiac enlargement. Verrucae on the valve leaflets cause a heart murmur. Myocarditis, coronary artery inflammation, and pulmonary arterial hypertension may be seen. Lupus nephritis is the main cause of renal damage in SLE. The kidney is the most important organ that determines the prognosis of SLE. In this section, cardiovascular involvement in SLE is illustrated.

Keywords: Cardiovascular diseases, Libman-Sacks endocarditis, Pericarditis, Pulmonary arterial hypertension, Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).

1. INTRODUCTION

Cardiovascular involvement often occurs in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). SLE causes cardiovascular involvement in 58% to 77% of cases while the disease. Cardiovascular diseases can involve the myocardium, pericardium, cardiac valves, and coronary arteries. Pericarditis is found as cardiomegaly. However, symptomatic cases of pericarditis are rather rare. Pericarditis is often accompanied by pleurisy. Tachycardia, cardiac enlargement, and negative T on ECG are non-specific findings of myocarditis. Myocarditis can cause arrhythmia and heart failure. Verrucae on the valve leaflets cause heart murmur (Libman-Sacks endocarditis). It is common on the mitral valves. Myocarditis and coronary artery inflammation may be seen. Pulmonary arterial hypertension is an important

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disease that affects the prognosis of patients with SLE. The kidney is one of the most important organs that determine the prognosis of SLE. In this section, we will outline the cardiovascular and renal involvement in SLE.

2. PERICARDITIS (FIGS. 1 - 2)



Fig. (1). Lupus pericarditis in a patient with SLE. Posteroanterior (PA) chest radiograph demonstrates moderate cardiomegaly, pericardial effusions, and bilateral pleural effusions. The lateral view also shows pleural effusions.



Fig. (2). Lupus pericarditis. Axial chest CT image of a patient with SLE showing a moderate pericardial collection and pleural effusion of the left lung.

Pericarditis is frequently seen in 17% to 50% and is the most common cardiac manifestation of patients with SLE [1, 2]. Electrocardiography can be useful in diagnosing pericarditis. However, in some cases, pericarditis is without effusion, and echocardiography is useless for diagnosis. Chest CT may show abnormal thickening of the pericardium and pericardial effusion.

3. MYOCARDITIS

Myocarditis is a rare condition that is often clinically asymptomatic [2]. Myocarditis may be due to an immune-mediated inflammatory process against striated muscles, or it may be due to drug toxicity from antimalarial drugs (chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine) [3]. If left untreated, it can lead to arrhythmias, dilated cardiomyopathy, total left ventricular dysfunction, and even death [3].

3.1. Libman-Sacks Endocarditis

Diseases of cardiac valves are also common disorders of the cardiac system in patients with SLE. Valvular disease is found in 18% to 74% of patients with SLE. The incidence depends on the duration and severity of the disease and the method of diagnosis. Valvular disease in SLE ranges from thickening of the valve leaflets to Libman-Sacks endocarditis.

3.2. Valvulopathy (Figs. 3 - 4)

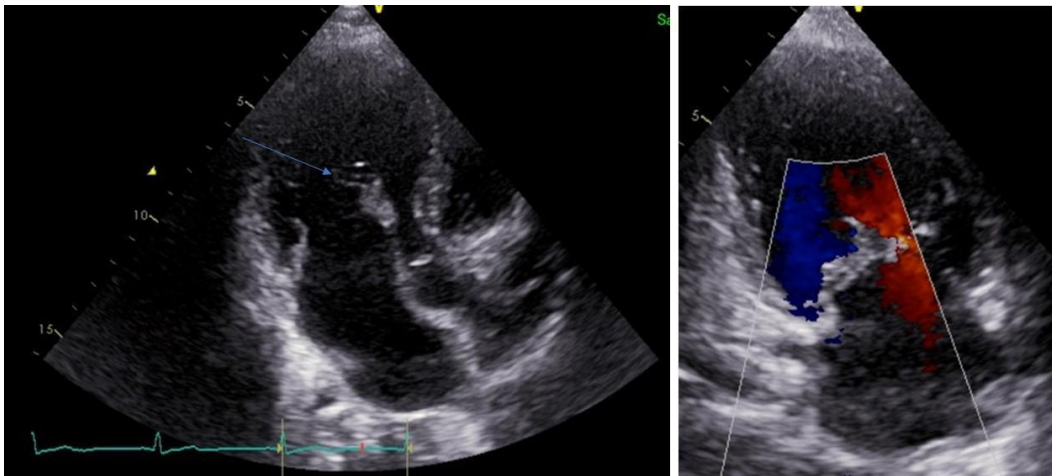


Fig. (3). Mitral valve Libman-Sacks endocarditis in a patient with SLE. Transthoracic echocardiogram demonstrates a mobile mass of the mitral valve consistent with vegetation.

CHAPTER 11

Gastrointestinal System in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

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Abstract: In systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), gastrointestinal symptoms, including nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, hematemesis, melena, ileus, ascites, and elevated hepatic and pancreatic enzymes are frequently observed. The gastrointestinal manifestations of SLE are diverse, including lupus peritonitis, gastritis, acute pancreatitis, cholecystitis, and lupus enteritis. This chapter provides an overview of the gastrointestinal manifestations of SLE.

Keywords: Gastrointestinal symptoms, Lupus enteritis, Lupus peritonitis, Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).

1. INTRODUCTION

Gastrointestinal symptoms, including nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, hematemesis, melena, ileus, ascites, and elevated hepatic and pancreatic enzymes, are frequently observed in patients with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). Among gastrointestinal lesions, intestinal ischemia, infarction, peritonitis, and perforation of the digestive tract are the most dangerous and fatal complications of SLE and require an early diagnosis.

There are no specific gastrointestinal lesions that occur only in SLE. However, small intestinal lesions are not common as gastrointestinal diseases in general subjects, and when they occur in SLE patients, it is strongly suggested that they are lesions due to SLE.

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Generalized abdominal pain is a common symptom of lupus gastrointestinal disease, and computed tomography (CT) is useful in the diagnosis of undiagnosed abdominal pain.

2. SEROSITIS (FIG. 1)

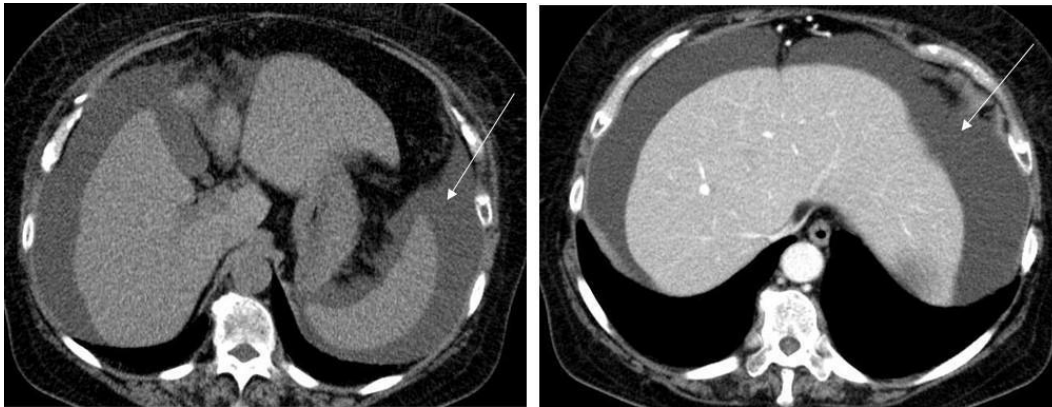


Fig. (1). Non-contrast-enhanced (left panel) and contrast-enhanced (right panel) computed tomographic (CT) scans of the abdomen showing marked amount of abdominal ascites (arrows) with fluid surrounding the spleen and the liver in a patient with SLE.

Ascites, a symptom of serositis of the abdomen, occurs in SLE patients with abdominal pain. Other causes of ascites include pancreatitis, hypoalbuminemia, glomerulonephritis, and nephrotic syndrome, constrictive pericarditis, and inflammatory peritonitis due to vasculitis.

3. GASTRITIS (FIG. 2)

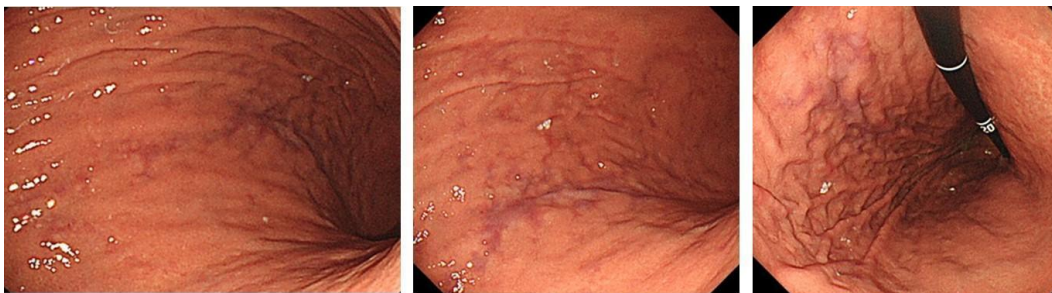


Fig. (2). Gastrointestinal endoscopy shows gastric antral vascular ectasia (GAVE) or lupus gastritis in a patient with SLE.

It has been reported that lupus gastritis, which is thought to be caused by SLE rather than drug-induced, was improved by treatment with glucocorticoid [1]. Then, in 1991, Musaey *et al.* described that SLE itself causes gastritis [2]. Gastric antral vascular ectasia (GAVE) or lupus gastritis in SLE is a rare cause of gastrointestinal bleeding. However, the pathogenesis of GAVE is not fully elucidated [3, 4].

4. LUPUS ENTERITIS (FIG. 3)

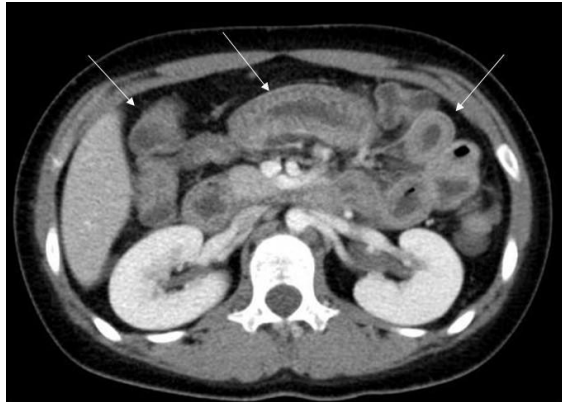


Fig. (3). Contrast-enhanced computed tomographic (CT) scans of the abdomen in a patient with SLE demonstrate small bowel mucosal edema and enhancement when seen en face (target sign) and in longitudinal view.

Lupus enteritis is a visceral vasculitis involving the small intestine, especially the jejunum and ileum. Lupus enteritis is usually difficult to detect with radiography or barium studies, but abdominal CT can be useful in detecting the disease.

5. CHOLECYSTITIS (FIG. 4)

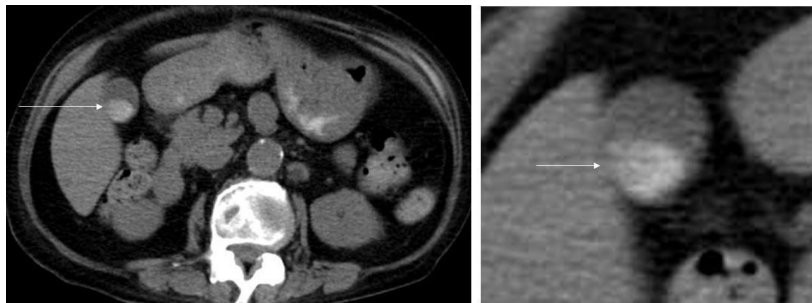


Fig. (4). Non-contrast-enhanced CT scans of the abdomen in a lupus patient with abdominal pain demonstrate a distended gallbladder with biliary sludge. Immediately surgery was performed, and then the histopathology of the resected gallbladder specimen confirmed the diagnosis of acalculous cholecystitis.

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