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Photosensitivity in systemic lupus erythematosus

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DESCRIPTION

A 29-year-old woman with a history of antiphospholipid syndrome and systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) with central nervous system involvement in remission for 2 years, presented with an erythematous cutaneous reaction after unprotected exposure to sunlight involving the face, neck, chest and shoulders (figure 1). The variable intensity of the eruption was related to the degree of skin exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation and the protective effect of the patient's clothing is visible (figure 2). Despite treatment, the cutaneous reaction worsened, extending to the hands and feet, with fever and cough. The diagnostic exams revealed only pancytopenia. Resolution of symptoms was achieved with the administration of corticotherapy and leucocyte growth factors.

Exposure to UV radiation can induce or exacerbate cutaneous and extracutaneous manifestations in SLE patients.¹ This case highlights the importance of counselling such patients regarding avoidance of prolonged sun exposure and wearing protective clothing and sunscreen.²

Competing interests None.

Patient consent Obtained.

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Figure 1 Erythematous cutaneous reaction after unprotected exposure to sunlight involving the face, neck, chest and shoulders in a patient with systemic lupus erythematosus.

Figure 2 The variability of the eruption is related to the protective effect of the patient's clothing.

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