

C3 New York Local (II)

World Journal

(Heading)

SYSTEMIC ERYTHEMATOSUS LUPUS WITHOUT WARNING ASIAN WOMEN HIGH INCIDENCE

(Subhead)

90% of the patients are women. Asians have 2 to 3 times more incidence than whites. Appropriate treatment can control the condition.

Reporter Chunxiang Jin/New York news

About 2 million people in the United States suffer from systemic erythematosus lupus (lupus). They are mostly young women. The number of Asian women suffering from the disease is two to three times more than their white counterparts.

On July 8, LANtern® (Lupus Asian Network) held the Lupus Health and Wellness Day in Manhattan's Chinatown. In the program, Dr. Lockshin, the keynote speaker, pointed out that the disease involves the autoimmune system to attack normal cells. So far it cannot be cured and the cause is still a mystery. However, early effective treatment can control the progression of the disease, as well as to prevent serious complications.

Dr. Michael D. Lockshin from the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York stated that there are different causes for lupus. Genetics and environmental factors can both contribute to the sickness. 90% of the patients are female and the majority of them are at childbearing age. African American women have the highest incidence, one out of every 250. Similarly, the chance of Asian American women getting the disease is two to three times higher than their white counterparts.

When the immune system attacks normal tissues and organs in the body, inflammation, redness, and swelling occur, or damaging various organs and body parts. Dr. Lockshin pointed out that lupus is not contagious, but the etiology in the medical profession is not clear at this point. The impact of the disease varies on different patients; therefore, it is very important to see the doctor on a regular basis. The initial symptoms often appear without any warning.

Since lupus mimics the symptoms of other diseases, it is difficult to diagnose. Symptoms may be characterized by a rash on the cheeks and across the bridge of the nose or skin discoloration, skin sensitivity to sunlight, joints swelling and pain, ulcer in the mouth and nose, sharp pain in the chest, and spasm. Dr. Lockshin also pointed out that if you have fever continuously, hair loss, fatigue, swollen lymph node, dry eyes and mouth, blood clots in the vessel, usually it indicates that lupus is in its active stage.

At present the medical profession is still unable to cure lupus, but through effective treatment can control the symptoms. Dr. Lockshin expressed that sometimes just by taking Aspirin a person can control the fever and joint pain. When the symptoms become severe, a stronger medicine like corticosteroid or other medicines will be administered. Often during the course of treatment, it is hard for the doctor to explain by just a "yes" or "no." There are many questions that the doctor can only answer "not sure." However, this doesn't mean that there is no way to treat the disease. Patients need to trust their doctors, trust themselves. It is helpful to get a lot of rest, as well as to avoid overworking.

Patients and family members can contact the LANtern® (Lupus Asian Network) for free bi-lingual Chinese support and education. Phone number: (866) 505-2253