

# Medical mystery unmasked: diagnosing lupus and developing the special treatment i...

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Over many years, the practice of medicine has yielded several discoveries and unmasked many mysteries. There are countless diseases circulating throughout the world, and many of them have baffled the most accomplished of physicians. For instance, autoimmune diseases such as Lupus cause irritations that no normal individual should be subjected to. Furthermore, “ patients who have their lupus treated at more than one care facility are at higher risk of developing severe infections and other diseases, a study indicates.” Treatment is essential for eliminating any disease but receiving treatment can become difficult due to external influences. Some patients are required to receive treatment from one facility and then travel to another treatment center. From a logistical standpoint, this may be the most pragmatic option for some. To be clear, “ Lupus affects a range of the body’s systems. By its very nature then, it may require care from different specialists, many of whom are likely to be at different locations.” Treatment for a life-threatening disease is a necessity for the individuals effected most by the condition. Lupus has many destructive properties coinciding with the human immune system. However, treating Lupus while traveling to several separate treatment centers can negatively effect one’s health. To understand this correlation, the traits of the Lupus condition must be examined.

### **What is Lupus?**

As an autoimmune disease, Lupus is more complex than other common illnesses. This condition is considered chronic, meaning that diseases of this nature can last for years. More often than not, the individuals with this condition continue to experience its effects for prolonged periods of time.

Furthermore, “Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that can damage any part of the body (skin, joints, and/or organs). “Chronic” means that the signs and symptoms tend to last longer than six weeks and often for many years.” Lupus has general symptoms, yet the diverse nature of the human body allows for many exceptions. For some, the effects of the symptoms associated with Lupus may be greater in discomfort than others. Other symptoms and conditional aspects of Lupus may affect the immune system, making it difficult to pinpoint the exact traits of Lupus. Furthermore, “Lupus can range from mild to life-threatening and should always be treated by a doctor. With good medical care, most people with lupus can lead a full life.” Individuals with Lupus need to be cognizant of everything that they come in contact with. Lupus also affects more than the immune system, so anything ingested may become harmful under certain circumstances. To expand on that note, “in lupus, something goes wrong with the immune system, which is the part of the body that fights off viruses, bacteria, and germs (“foreign invaders,” like the flu). Normally our immune systems produce proteins called “antibodies” which protect the body from these invaders.” The most simple of germs can create a huge issue for those with the Lupus condition. Not every treatment for Lupus is universal among patients, meaning that each patient with this condition must find treatment methods that work for them specifically.

### **How is Lupus Normally Treated?**

As stated earlier, Lupus is not a one size fits all medical condition. As an autoimmune disease, the causes of this condition are not entirely understood, leaving room for confusion. One of the best ways to gain a

stronger concept of the Lupus condition would be to consult with “ a rheumatologist, a doctor who specializes in diseases of the joints and muscles, generally treats people with lupus. If lupus has caused damage to a particular organ, other specialists should be consulted.” When Lupus effects the healthy parts of the human body, the condition is either extremely aggressive or it was left untreated. Ignoring a health issue of this magnitude is severely irresponsible, and this negligence is simply not necessary. The medical world has established many facets so that no one has the excuse to go without some form of treatment. To reiterate on that note, “ physicians treat lupus using a wide variety of medicines, ranging in strength from mild to extremely strong. Prescribed medications will usually change during a person’s lifetime with lupus.” Not every treatment will work for every Lupus patient, and this is the case for medication. Many of the complications associated with Lupus are misunderstood or misinterpreted as a result of bad information. Lupus often goes disregarded due to its wide array of functional treatment methods. However, there is a considerable amount of work intertwined with the maintenance of a Lupus patient’s health. Lupus patients may require physicians such as “ a dermatologist for cutaneous lupus (skin disease), a cardiologist for heart disease, a nephrologist for kidney disease, a neurologist for brain and nervous system disease, or a gastroenterologist for gastrointestinal tract disease. A woman with lupus who is considering a pregnancy needs an obstetrician who specializes in high-risk pregnancies.” The right medical personnel and the appropriate support system will most definitely benefit any Lupus patient. However, not every Lupus patient is fortunate enough to all of their resources consolidated in one area. For many

Lupus patients, traveling from one medical facility to the other may not seem like that harmful of an issue.

### **Why Should Lupus Patients Limit their Amount of Health Care Facilities?**

Not every health care facility operates the same as the next. To elaborate, each medical facility that treats Lupus patients operates in a slightly different manner. With policies and procedures to think about, moving from one facility to another can create a significant difference. On another note, “the problem is that while the vast majority of patient records are computerized, many care facilities failed to share it with each other.” Not every facility fails to distribute the correct units of information, yet there is a serious gap in the current system. This is not an isolated issue as it effects most of the medical facilities across the United States. For instance, “ninety-seven percent of hospitals and 83 percent of clinics have computerized patient records. They are comprehensive, with information on test results, patient care, outcomes, and billing codes.” Computers are extremely useful, especially in a society in which just about every aspect of life is based on technology. However, when information is transferred, there is a small cookie cutter approach as to how content is communicated. To elaborate, “the information is not shared from provider to provider, however, what one provider sees will be only a portion of the total care that a patient has been receiving.” Mass communication has always provided the world with benefits and easy access. However, in this case, the lack of communication is what causes issues for the sick and injured. As far as Lupus treatment goes, communication would be necessary to essentially save someone’s life.

Every human being is different from the other, and not every Lupus patient requires the same form of treatment based only on speculation. If any issues are going to be reduced, “ making sure each care provider obtains a complete picture of a lupus patient’s needs requires exchanging information.” Lupus patients who have multiple treatment facilities to work with must remember that their health is at risk. The wrong information can possibly lead to the wrong treatment methods, causing more issues than required or necessary. For an overview, “ 20 percent of the 4, 276 lupus patients in the database had been treated at more than one facility. African-Americans and patients on public health insurance programs such as Medicare experienced care fragmentation at a 66 percent higher rate than whites or those who had private insurance, the team found.” Money is always a factor in the medical world, mainly as a result of insurance needs and government policies. To reduce costs, there is an unspoken format as to how information is spread. Research conducted in reference to the maintenance of information concerning the individuals that work through several facilities yielded many results. The results displayed “ factors such as age, sex, race, insurance status, length of follow-up time, and number of visits. The team concluded that care fragmentation does increase the risk of lupus patients developing severe infections or another disease.” The options for finding treatments for the Lupus condition are wide, but they are not always simple to obtain. Some individuals are required to drive or travel considerable distances to and from treatment centers just, so they can maintain their health. To limit the amount of complications associated with moving from one treatment center to the other, it would be wise of the

patient to keep a list or schedule with them regarding their treatment processes.