

Photoprotective habits in children with systemic lupus erythematosus in Siriraj hospital

Tipusa Janthongsri¹, Wanee Wisuthsarewong¹, Rattanaivalai Nitiyaron¹

¹*Department of Pediatrics, Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand*

Background: Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is a complex autoimmune disease that can involve multiple organ system. Exposure to ultraviolet irradiation (UVR) can exacerbate pre-existing SLE or even induce systemic organ manifestations.

Objectives: To evaluate photoprotective habits and the factors influencing photoprotective habits in children with SLE at Siriraj hospital.

Methods: This questionnaire-based, cross-sectional study recruited 96 pediatric patients with SLE. Data were obtained by a face-to-face interview and medical record.

Results: Ninety-six patients were enrolled with the female to male ratio was 8:1. The mean age of patients at the enrolled date was 13.7 ± 2.4 years and the mean disease duration was 1.8 ± 0.7 years. Most of the patients directly exposed to sunlight less than 2 hours per day, but 39% of the patients went out during the peak hours of UVR. The activities when they exposed to sunlight were traveling to school and doing activities at school. Up to 95% of the patients used sunscreen. However, only 64% of the patients applied it every day and 35% of the patients used adequate amount of sunscreen. SLE patients with shorter disease duration had significantly exposed to sunlight more than the patients with the disease duration longer than 4 years ($P = 0.04$).

Conclusion: Sunscreen was the most common photoprotective method. However, majority of the patients used sunscreen inappropriately. The shorter disease duration was significantly associated with the longer duration of sunlight exposure. Regular evaluation and emphasis of the important of photoprotection should be encouraged in SLE patients.

Research funding: This study was supported by a grant from the Research Development Fund, Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand.