

PRURITUS—A CLINICAL SIGN OF ACTIVITY OF PEMPHIGUS

In pemphigus, there are no definite clinical signs to assess the disease activity except for the appearance of new cutaneous lesions or the extent of body surface involvement. The only reliable method of ascertaining the disease activity or an impending relapse is to measure the specific circulating antibodies in the blood by indirect immunofluorescence.¹ This facility is available at only a few centres. Therefore it, becomes imperative to look for other clinical signs which might indicate the disease activity or a relapse. Recently, Bystryń² reported pruritus as a clinical indicator of disease activity and a guide to treatment. Since then, we have also observed severe pruritus preceding a relapse, usually a few hours prior to the appearance of a fresh crop of lesions in some patients of pemphigus. The pruritus subsides once the disease is

brought under control with corticosteroids given as a pulse. We would like to share the experience of others in this regard. Pruritus as a sign of disease activity has not been mentioned in the ritual text. Though it may not be present in all patients, it has been certainly overlooked.

A J Kanwar, Rajeev Gupta and Surrinder Kaur

Department of Dermatology, Postgraduate
Institute of Medical Education and Research,
Chandigarh.

References

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2. Bystryń JC : Adjuvant therapy of pemphigus, *Arch Dermatol*, 1984; 120 : 941-951.