

BULLOUS PEMPHIGOID

Bullous Pemphigoid (BP) is a chronic blistering of the skin. (Bullous is the medical term for a large blister.)

It ranges from mildly itchy welts to severe blisters and infection and may affect a small area of the body or be widespread.

The vast majority affected are elderly, but it has been seen in all ages.

It is an autoimmune disorder, which means it is caused when the body's immune system malfunctions.

Possible triggers:

- Diabetes
- Rheumatoid Arthritis.
- Drugs such as furosemide, penicillin.
- Mechanical trauma
- Physical Trauma such as burns.

The blisters mainly appear on areas of the body that flex or move. Approximately 15-20% of sufferers also develop blisters in the mouth or down the throat.

Diagnosis:

Due to all the variations and differing degrees of symptoms, the diagnosis must be confirmed by a skin biopsy.

Blood tests are usually inconclusive.

Treatment:

This is generally focused on relief of symptoms and prevention of infection.

Antibiotics are used for mild or moderate forms of the disease.

Oral steroids are the treatment of choice for more severe cases.

Severe cases must be treated in hospital to allow expert dressing of wounds and intravenous injections.

Bullous Pemphigoid is a self-limiting disease that in most cases eventually clears up and the treatment can be stopped.

Treatment is usually required for several years, but generally after the first few months medication can be reduced.

BP often has a pattern of remissions and flare-ups

NB: Bullous Pemphigoid is not contagious

FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.aocd.org/skin/dermatologic_diseases.

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