

## REVIEW

# Nonneoplastic mucocutaneous lesions in organ transplant recipients

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**Summary**

Nonneoplastic mucocutaneous lesions are frequent in organ transplant recipients. Many of them are caused by a direct toxicity of immunosuppressive drugs, in particular glucocorticoids and cyclosporine. The effects of these agents are dose- and time-dependent. Glucocorticoids can cause acne, Cushingoid appearance, irregular purpuric areas, friable skin, and wide and violaceous stripes. Cyclosporine can cause hypertrichosis, pilosebaceous lesions, and gum hypertrophy. Patients with esthetic changes may show poor adherence to treatment with these immunosuppressive agents that may lead to progressive graft dysfunction. Apart from this direct toxicity, vigorous immunosuppression may render the transplant recipients more susceptible to mucocutaneous infections. Fungal infection, viral warts, and bacterial folliculitis are the most frequent types of mucocutaneous infection. Some fungal infections, such as oral candidiasis and pityriasis versicolor, are relatively trivial, but other mycotic infections can cause severe or disfiguring lesions. Among viral infections, warts and condylomata caused by human papilloma virus are frequent and may favor the development of nonmelanoma skin cancer. Bacterial infections are usually trivial in the early period after transplantation, being represented almost exclusively by folliculitis. However, subcutaneous infections may cause a necrotizing fasciitis which is a life-threatening disorder, usually sustained by polymicrobial pathogens.

Nonneoplastic cutaneous or mucosal complications are frequent in organ transplant recipients. In a systematic overview made in Leiden, 591 nonmalignant skin diseases were registered in 1768 (33%) organ transplant recipients followed over 13 years [1]. Smaller series reported that the prevalence of nonmalignant skin lesions in transplant recipients may range between 49% and 87% [2–5]. The lesions are mainly related to the prolonged use of immunosuppressive drugs, but an important contributing role may also be played by exposure to sunlight and viral infections. Although the pathogenesis of these lesions is often multifactorial, we will separate them into lesions caused by drugs and by infections.

**Drug-related skin lesions (Table 1)**

Calcium channel blockers can cause some cutaneous abnormalities, including photo-damage of the head and

neck, teleangiectasia, and solar elastosis [6] as well as gingival hyperplasia [7]. However, most skin lesions in renal transplant recipients are caused by immunosuppressive drugs, in particular glucocorticoids and cyclosporine. An important consequence of the esthetic changes caused by these agents is a poor adherence to treatment which represents a major cause of graft failure [8].

**Glucocorticoids**

Renal transplant recipients given glucocorticoids may show a number of dermatological lesions which are related to the doses and the time of exposure of these agents. While the doses of glucocorticoids used in transplantation were very high in the recent past, the current immunosuppression is based on low doses of glucocorticoids and some units even treat transplant recipients with steroid-free regimens. As a consequence, the skin changes

**Table 1.** Main skin and mucosal abnormalities related to the use of immunosuppressive drug.

Glucocorticoids	Acne
	Cushingoid appearance
	Bateman's purpura and skin atrophy
	Striae rubrae
	Hair growth
Cyclosporine	Hypertrichosis
	Sebaceous hyperplasia
	Alopecia
	Skin hyperpigmentation
	Gum hyperplasia
Tacrolimus	Alopecia
	Atopic dermatitis
mTOR inhibitors	Aphthous stomatitis
	Acne
	Nail alterations
Azathioprine	Thinning of the hair
Mycophenolate salts	Aphthous ulcers
	Onycholysis

caused by glucocorticoids are today less frequent and severe. The most common complication is acne, which is usually dose-related. Acne occurs early on the cheeks, forehead, chin and chest. Rarely the lesions may progress to nodulocystic transformation (acne conglobata). The severity of acne tends to decrease when the doses of glucocorticoids are reduced. Doxycycline, 100 mg daily, may be effective in reducing acne. Spironolactone is also an effective alternative treatment in women while it should not be used in men because of the risk of gynaecomastia, or in pregnant women because of its teratogenic effects [9]. The most potent agent for treatment of acne is isotretinoin which causes apoptosis of sebocytes by increasing the skin surface levels of neutrophil gelatinase-associated lipocalin [10].

A typical side effect of glucocorticoids is represented by Cushingoid appearance, with facial and neck fullness, buffalo hump, increased supraclavicular and suprasternal fat, and trunkal obesity. These features are caused by abnormalities in fat distribution and are particularly frequent in the post-transplant period, when higher doses of glucocorticoids are used. In the long term, when the doses are reduced, these lesions may spontaneously disappear but some patients may maintain a Cushingoid appearance despite the low dosage of prednisone.

Bateman's purpura and severe skin atrophy are almost constantly seen in patients receiving a prolonged treatment with glucocorticoids. Bateman's purpura consists of irregular purpuric areas that develop spontaneously or after minor trauma on the extensor surfaces of the hands, forearms, and legs, often with spontaneous star-shaped pseudo-scars. Skin atrophy is characterized by increased brittleness and reduced thickness of the skin. Topical reti-

noic acid at concentrations ranging from 0.01% to 0.05%, may improve skin atrophy. Some patients, however, complain of irritation. Ammonium lactate 6–12% creams are usually better tolerated.

*Striae rubrae* are wide and violaceous stripes, mainly located over the abdomen, thighs, and buttocks. Children and women receiving high-dose prednisone are particularly prone to this complication. Treatment is difficult. A mild improvement of *striae rubrae* may be obtained with fractional photothermolysis [11], but there is no experience of this treatment in transplant patients. Some patients may have increased hair growth mainly on the face and back.

### Cyclosporine

Many skin complications of cyclosporine are dose-dependent and are less frequent today with the lower dosages used by most transplant units. A well-known complication of cyclosporine is hypertrichosis, characterized by thick and pigmented hair appearing over the trunk, back, shoulder, arms, neck, forehead, helices, and malar areas. It is particularly disturbing in black-haired women and in children. Hypertrichosis is usually dose-dependent and is particularly frequent and severe in the pediatric age. Some investigators reported that in children, it is more related to the age than the dosage [12], but others found a strict correlation between hypertrichosis and blood levels of cyclosporine also in children [13]. A possible mechanism for cyclosporine-induced hypertrichosis is the increased activity of alpha-reductase, an enzyme that transforms androgens into dihydrotestosterone in peripheral tissues [14]. Treatment with finasteride, an inhibitor of alpha-reductase successfully used in patients with idiopathic hirsutism may be helpful [15]. Depilatory cream or shaving with an electric razor can also be used to remove excessive hair. Long pulsed lasers emitting wavelengths targeting hair melanin are very useful in our experience to obtain long-term epilation in kidney transplant patients. In resistant cases, patients may be switched from cyclosporine to tacrolimus which does not cause hypertrichosis [16].

Pilosebaceous lesions are also quite frequent, probably because cyclosporine, which is highly lipophilic, may partly be eliminated through the sebaceous glands and can exert a direct action on pilosebaceous unit. Sebaceous hyperplasia, epidermal cysts, and pilar keratosis have been reported in 10–20% of patients treated with cyclosporine, but it can be difficult to discern whether these lesions should be attributed to cyclosporine, to glucocorticoids, or to both drugs. Rarely, typical follicular changes different from those observed in hypertrichosis or pilar keratosis can be observed. This particular toxicity is seen after

many months of treatment at excessive plasma concentrations. The disorder may be explained by the fact that cyclosporine extends the anagen phase of the follicular cycle so inducing toxic follicular dystrophy at higher tissue concentrations [17].

Alopecia areata and universalis have also been observed. Accelerated male-pattern balding may occur. Skin hyperpigmentation and bullous or vegetative lesions have also been reported in cyclosporine-treated patients [18]. Cyclosporine may also be responsible for acne.

Gum hyperplasia occurs in about one-third of transplant patients treated with cyclosporine. It is often associated with elevated trough blood levels of cyclosporine and is frequent in children [12]. It is caused by hyperplasia of epithelial and connective tissue components as well as by altered extracellular metabolism. This complication generally occurs after 3 or more months of treatment and can be worsened by the concomitant administration of calcium channel blockers or phenytoin [19]. The incidence of gingival hyperplasia seems to be more frequent in patients with chronic graft dysfunction [20]. Gingival overgrowth is at least partially preventable with careful oral hygiene. Initially, a hyperplasia of the anterior interdental papillae occurs which subsequently spreads to the whole gum also involving the inner side. A 5-day treatment with azythrocin, a macrolide antimicrobial agent, may improve the subjective symptoms and the clinical picture [21,22]. The most severe cases require gingivectomy [23]. The possibility that a gingival Kaposi's sarcoma may mimic a cyclosporine-related gingival hyperplasia should be taken into account.

### Tacrolimus

Despite the similar mechanism of inhibition of calcineurin, tacrolimus gives fewer skin abnormalities and does not cause gingival hyperplasia. However, cases of alopecia [24,25] and severe atopic dermatitis [26], have been reported in transplant patients treated with tacrolimus.

### mTOR inhibitors

The use of sirolimus or everolimus is frequently associated with skin disorders and mucositis, [27,28]. Aphthous stomatitis with mouth ulcers can develop immediately after the introduction of a loading dose sirolimus, suggesting that the toxic effect on oral mucosa may be dose-dependent. Oral ulcers have been reported to occur in up to 1/4 of patients treated with mTOR inhibitors in association with mycophenolate [29]. Mucosal ulcers are usually self-limited but they may last for several days and have a high risk of recurrence [28]. This may lead the patient to a poor adherence to treatment. Acne-like eruptions

has been reported to occur in 13–46% of patients treated with sirolimus [28]. Follicular acneiform eruptions [30] and ulcerating debilitating maculopapular rash [31] severe enough to necessitate cessation of sirolimus in renal recipients have been described. A high rate of nail alterations, including onychomalacia, onychorrexia, leukonychia, and onycholysis has been reported in renal transplant recipients treated with sirolimus [32].

### Azathioprine

Azathioprine may cause thinning of the hair and scalp hair loss [33]. Rarely, it may also be responsible for changes of color or texture of the hair.

### Mycophenolate salts

Aphthous ulcers are relatively frequent and often recur in patients treated with mycophenolate particularly in association with sirolimus or everolimus [28,29,34]. Rare cases of mycophenolate-associated onycholysis have also been reported [35].

### Infections

Cutaneous infections can occur in 66–80% of transplant patients. [4,5,36,37].

Fungal infection, folliculitis and viral warts are the most frequent types of cutaneous infection [38]. Some infections, such as candidal infection, herpes simplex infection, and impetigo are most frequent during the first post-transplant year. Other infections, such as dermatomycoses, herpes zoster, and folliculitis can affect a substantial number of new patients after the first post-transplant year [36]. The risk of skin infection is related to the intensity of immunosuppression. Of note, however, also the type of immunosuppression may be important. Actually, there is experimental and clinical evidence that mTOR inhibitors may inhibit the replication of several herpes viruses, including cytomegalovirus [39–42].

### Mycotic infections (Table 2)

There is wide spectrum of mycotic infections causing cutaneous diseases. Fungal lesions may be typical, but are often aspecific or ambiguous. Cutaneous lesions may be the sign of a trivial mycotic disease or the marker of a disseminated, potentially lethal fungal illness, so great attention should be given to their early recognition [43].

Among the superficial cutaneous fungal infections, candidiasis of the mouth and intertriginous areas of the skin is particularly frequent in the early post-transplant period when the dosage of immunosuppressive drugs is highest

**Table 2.** Main fungal infections in organ transplant recipient.

Fungus	Signs and symptoms	Treatment
Candida	Stomatitis	Nystatin shallow, Cotrimazole
Pityrosporon	Pityriasis versicolor Folliculitis	Imidazole cream Selenium sulfate shampoo
Aspergillus	Erythematous plaques, papulae, painful subcutaneous nodules	Liposomal amphotericin B. Voriconazole, Posaconazole
Cryptococcus	Nodular masses, maculopapulae, ulcers, abscesses	Polyene, Imidazole
Histoplasma	Erythematous and infiltrating plaques	Itraconazole, Voriconazole
Alternaria	Papulae, smooth and firm nodules	Excisional surgery, Itraconazole
Chromomycetes	Papulae, verrucous nodules, ulcerative plaques	Itraconazole, Posaconazole
Mucormycosis	Skin induration with erythema, necrosis	Amphotericin B, Posaconazole
Paecilomyces	Verrucous nodules	Voriconazole, Posaconazole

[44]. Candida-associated denture stomatitis occurs often in denture wearers taking immunosuppressive therapy [45]. Candidiasis may cause irregular or widespread erythema, erosive changes, or a typical creamy surface. Nystatin swish and shallow every 6 h or cotrimazole may be effective in preventing oral and esophageal fungal infections. Infections caused by dermatophytes, the ringworm-causing fungi, typically occur several months after transplantation. Their clinical appearance is often atypical because of the lack of the erythematous changes. Lesions may present as papules, plaques, ulcers, or subcutaneous nodules [46].

Pityriasis versicolor can occur in more than 30% of transplant patients [47]. This complication, which is caused by the lipophilic yeast *Pityrosporon ovale/orbiculare*, can involve large areas of the trunk and flexural zones where it causes multiple and widespread small scaly macules either hypopigmented or hyperpigmented. The same fungus can also cause a folliculitis over the shoulders, chest, upper back, and arms. It appears as an acneiform eruption of bland or mildly erythematous follicular papules and pustules. Treatment rests on imidazole cream or selenium sulfate shampoo.

Seborrheic dermatitis, a common inflammatory dermatosis probably caused by an increased colonization with *Malassezia* yeast, may occur in 9.5% of kidney transplant recipients, being more frequently observed in male patients and in patients with a long history of transplant. Such a condition may be significantly associated with cutaneous malignancy, in particular squamous cell carcinoma [48].

Primary opportunistic deep cutaneous fungal infections are rare but may cause significant morbidity and mortality in immunosuppressed patients. However, there are few data about their incidence in solid organ transplant recipients. In an Italian series of 3293 consecutive organ transplant recipients with a mean follow-up time since transplantation of  $2.5 \pm 2.0$  years, only 22 cases of deep

cutaneous mycoses were detected, an incidence rate of 1.2 cases per 1000 persons-year at risk. Six patients had subsequent systemic involvement and three patients died of systemic dissemination [49].

Primary cutaneous aspergillosis is characterized by painful erythematous plaques and sometimes cellulitis. Papulae, pustules and/or subcutaneous nodules may be seen in case of disseminated aspergillosis [50,51]. Early administration of intravenous amphotericin B or anti-mold azoles (voriconazole or posaconazole) are recommended in case of aspergillosis.

Cutaneous cryptococcosis usually develops more than 6 months after transplantation and may have varied presentations [52]. In a review of 146 organ transplant recipients with cryptococcosis, cutaneous cryptococcosis was documented in 26 (17.8%) patients and manifested as nodules (35%), maculopapule (30%), ulcer/pustule/abscess (30%), and cellulitis (30%). Two-third of the skin lesions occurred in the lower extremities. Localized disease developed in 31% and disseminated disease in 69% of patients [53]. Treatment includes both polyene and imidazole antifungal agents in addition to surgical adjuvant therapy.

Dissemination of previously localized pathogenic agents, such as *Histoplasma capsulatum*, may lead to erysipela-like lesions. Early cutaneous histoplasmosis consists of painless large erythematous and infiltrative plaque, whereas older lesions are represented by multiple draining ulcers [54,55]. Treatment of histoplasmosis rests on itraconazole or voriconazole.

Subcutaneous pheohyphomycosis caused by dermatiaceous fungi may also occur. Dermal alternariasis can manifest as fleshy papules and nodules, smooth and firm, spreading centrifugally, with an elevated crusted border and a central area slightly depressed and atrophic [56]. During a 20-year period from 1989 to 2008, eight solid organ transplant recipients, all of them highly immunosuppressed, developed *Alternaria* species infections at the

Mayo Clinic. Wide excisional surgery combined with prolonged itraconazole therapy and reduction in immunosuppressive regimens provided the best chance of cure [57]. Phycomycosis of the sinuses may manifest as a facial cellulitis.

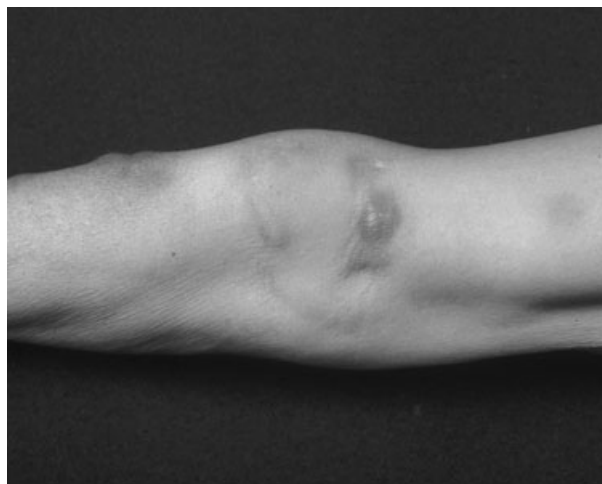
Chromomycosis is a mycotic infection that is more frequent in tropical and subtropical regions. It is caused by pigmented fungi that are common saprophytes growing in soil, vegetation, and wood. Several cases of cutaneous chromomycosis have been reported in transplant recipients [58–60]. It is characterized by scaly papules that may progress to verrucous nodules or ulcerating plaques that may be treated with itraconazole or posaconazole. In difficult cases, the diagnosis requires histopathology and isolation of colonies of the dematiaceous mold in culture [60].

Whereas mucormycosis (zygomycosis) is one of the most common causes of opportunistic mycotic infection in immunosuppressed patients, cutaneous mucormycosis is rare. Only 25 cases of primary mucormycosis in organ transplant recipients have been reported in a recent review [61]. Cutaneous zygomycosis may be localized, may extend to deep underlying tissues, or may be disseminated. The most common clinical presentation is induration of the skin with surrounding erythema, rapidly progressing to necrosis. Histological examination and culture of soft tissue are important for the diagnosis of cutaneous zygomycosis. The demonstration of nonseptate hyphae in smears or by culture is the most useful tool for diagnosis. Intravenous amphotericin B followed by oral posaconazole is the recommended treatment [62].

Paecilomyces is a cosmopolitan filamentous fungus. Among the different species of this ubiquitous saprophytic fungus, the most common are *P. lilacinus* and *P. variotii*. Paecilomyces species are an infrequent cause of fungal disease in transplant patients. Cutaneous nodular and verrucous lesions are the most common presentation. In a few weeks, these lesions may become ulcerated, hemorrhagic, and painful [63]. To identify these infections, a polymerase chain reaction is usually required [64]. Paecilomyces infections may respond to amphotericin B, but today voriconazole or posaconazole represent the first line therapy in transplant patients [65]. Surgical debridement is often required.

Sporotrichosis is a disease caused by the infection of the fungus *Sporothrix schenckii*. Cutaneous symptoms include nodular lesions (Fig. 1) or bumps at the point of entry. The lesion starts off small and painless, and ranges in color from pink to purple. In immunosuppressed transplant recipients, the disease may spread to joints, bone, as well as to central nervous system [66].

Fungal infection may also affect the nails. Onychomycosis can occur in about 8% of renal transplant recipients [67]. It is mainly caused by yeast-like fungi. Onychomy-



**Figure 1** Subcutaneous nodules in a patient with sporotrichosis. Subcutaneous nodules may be the first presentation of severe disseminated fungal or bacterial infections (courtesy of prof. Stefano Veraldi, University of Milan).

cosis is more common in patients with a long duration of transplantation. It manifests mainly in distal and lateral sub-ungueal sites. The lesions include longitudinal ridging, distal onycholysis, distal erythema, splinter hemorrhages of the nail plate and transverse leukonychia. Oral terbinafine is an efficacious treatment for onychomycosis [68], although anecdotal cases of reversible liver dysfunction have been reported [69].

### Viral infections

Herpes virus infections are frequent in organ transplant recipients. Herpes simplex may have a limited extension without serious consequences but may also cause multifocal, extensive, and hemorrhagic lesions. Ulcers of the mouth and the perioral, perigenital, and perianal skin can occur in the most severe cases [70].

Herpes zoster can be responsible for gangrenous and hemorrhagic lesions, which usually do not extend to other areas. However, atypical herpetic infection may also cause disseminated ulcerative or necrotic skin. The administration of systemic acyclovir (5 mg/kg intravenously every 8 h for 5 days) or valacyclovir (1 g orally three times daily for 7 days) is mandatory for patients with severe lesions.

Varicella can occur in transplant patients and can have a life-threatening course. Varicella zoster virus is often resistant to acyclovir as a result of mutations in virus thymidine kinase, which is the target protein of acyclovir [71]. Children awaiting a renal transplant should receive specific vaccine to prevent this complica-



tion [72]. Reduction, or even withdrawal, of immunosuppressive therapy remains the cornerstone to treatment in severe cases of herpes virus infection [73]. Specific immunoglobulin infusion and acyclovir (10 mg/kg intravenously every 8 h for 7–10 days) may improve the prognosis. Exceptional cases have been described of chronic, localized, verrucous varicella presenting with cutaneous dissemination in varicella-zoster seronegative renal transplant patients [74].

Cutaneous manifestations caused by cytomegaloviruses are very rare. They consist of exanthema with vasculitis, hyperpigmented nodules and plaques, vesicobullae, and buccal and perineal ulcerations. Oral leukoplakia, a typical Epstein–Barr virus lesion, mostly observed in patients affected by acquired immune deficiency syndrome, has also been reported in HIV-negative transplant recipients [75].

Warts and condylomata are frequent in long-term functioning transplant patients, approaching 85% at 5 years [76–78]. Warts develop on sun-exposed areas, mainly in light-skinned patients, and are usually multiple. Their extension may be so widespread as to constitute general verrucosis. Warts are generally caused by human papilloma virus (HPV) and are considered as potential predictors for the development of coincidental non melanoma skin cancer [79]. The types of human HPV found in organ transplant recipients may be different from that seen in the general population. In a study, nine of 10 HPV detected in organ transplant recipients were gamma-PV and one belonged to the genus beta-PV [80]. There is a paucity of information about the oncogenicity of beta-PVs: The role of Beta-PV in the development of cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma was demonstrated by a large multicenter case-control study performed in three countries with different ultraviolet exposure. The presence of 25 beta-PV types in eyebrow hair follicles was determined using a highly sensitive HPV DNA genotyping assay and antibodies for the most prevalent beta-PV types. The presence of beta-PV DNA was associated with an increased risk of squamous cell carcinoma in the Netherlands and Italy, but not in Australia. A positive antibody response against 4 or more beta-PV types was associated with squamous cell carcinoma in Australia, the Netherlands and fair-skinned Italians [81]. In transplant recipients, HPV can also be responsible of anal or genital warts [82], condylomata acuminata [83], or molluscum contagiosum [84]. About 20% of renal transplant patients have antibodies against virus-like particles of epidermodysplasia verruciformis [85], a precancerous condition characterized by several widespread viral warts and pityriasis versicolor-like lesions. Topical ker-

atolytic agents or retinoic acid is the treatments of choice. Imiquimod cream (5%) may be used in resistant warts [86]. Topical cidofovir (1%) may also be useful for treatment of verruca vulgaris or recalcitrant warts [87,88]. Conversion to mTOR inhibitors proved to be a useful strategy for recalcitrant cutaneous viral warts in transplant recipients [89,90].

### Bacterial infections

Bacterial infections are usually trivial in the early period after transplantation, being represented almost exclusively by folliculitis. However, subcutaneous abscesses, erysipelas, and impetigo, caused by Gram-positive cocci, may develop in the long term.

Necrotizing fasciitis is a rare but life-threatening disorder caused by a rapidly spreading subcutaneous infection, usually sustained by polymicrobial pathogens [91]. Clinically necrotizing fasciitis is characterized by progressive inflammation and extensive necrosis of the skin and soft tissue. Renal transplant patients receiving high-dose glucocorticoids are particularly susceptible to this complication. The presence of a nephrotic syndrome further increases the risk of necrotizing fasciitis. This infection carries a high rate of mortality, ranging between 33% and 73% [92]. Prompt recognition and aggressive treatment, including surgical intervention with debridement of necrotic tissue and extensive fasciotomy may improve the prognosis.

Not only fungal infections but also Nocardiosis [93] or disseminated tuberculosis [94,95] may present with subcutaneous nodules. The investigation of cutaneous lesions is important to reach a definitive diagnosis for possible future disseminated infections. Rarely, cutaneous tuberculosis may mimic erysipelas [96]. Skin infections caused by atypical mycobacteria may manifest as a spreading cellulitis around joints or as cutaneous or subcutaneous nodules [97]. In particular infections caused by *M. abscessus*, an ubiquitous organism found in the environment and that infrequently gives disease in humans, have increased in the last 5 years, possibly as a result of more focused search for the lesions. However, the exact incidence of *M. abscessus* infection among solid organ transplant recipients is unknown and only anecdotal cases have been reported in the literature [98,99]. Respiratory and cutaneous samples are predominant, with skin lesions being an important site of primary symptom preceding the dissemination of infection. The optimal regimen remains undefined since *M. abscessus* is resistant to most antimycobacterial drugs. The outcome depends mainly on a rapid diagnosis and a prompt treatment based on susceptibility test results.

## Parasitic infection

Norwegian scabies is characterized by thick crusted plaques occurring in wide areas of the skin. Several cases of Norwegian cases have been reported in transplant recipients [100–102]. When complicated by brain abscess the outcome of this disease may be fatal [103].

Leishmaniasis is a heterogeneous group of diseases that can range from a solitary, spontaneous healing ulcer, to destructive mucocutaneous disease to generalized visceral involvement which may be lethal if not treated. Leishmaniasis is caused by protozoan parasites and is transmitted by the bite of certain species of sand fly. Mucocutaneous leishmaniasis is a feared form of leishmaniasis because it produces destructive and disfiguring lesions of the face. Although cutaneous leishmaniasis is rare in transplant recipients, the number of published cases has quadrupled since the beginning of the 1990s [104]. Most cases have been observed in patients living in tropical countries or in the Mediterranean basin, but although rarely it has also been observed in transplant recipient in the United States [105]. Leishmaniasis is most commonly associated with kidney transplantation (77%) and cases are also recorded among patients undergoing liver, heart, lung, pancreas, and bone marrow transplantation. Early diagnosis is crucial for therapy and outcome; however, this is frequently overlooked or delayed. Mucocutaneous leishmaniasis is treated with long courses (e.g. 30 days) of pentavalent antimonials, including meglumine antimoniate and sodium stibogluconate, in a high dose (20 mg antimony per kg body weight). However, antimonials may be responsible for side effects, such as musculoskeletal pain, gastrointestinal disturbances, headache, electrocardiographic Q-T interval prolongation, renal tubular toxicity, and a mild to moderate increase in liver and pancreatic enzymes [106]. Moreover, not all the cases of mucocutaneous leishmaniasis respond to treatment [107] and complete unresponsiveness to antimony may even develop in endemic areas [108]. Second line treatments in antimony-resistant patients include liposomal amphotericin B [109] and pentamidine. This drug is as toxic as antimonials but proved to be effective in anecdotal antimonial-resistant cases [110]. A new series of monoamidoxime derivatives showed valuable *in vitro* activities toward *Leishmania donovani* 40 times more selective than pentamidine, and 1.6 times more than amphotericin B, used as reference drug compounds [111].

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