



SERUM TIMES

Monthly | Volume XI | Issue I | January 2026

SERUM MEDICAL BULLETIN

From the desk of the Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers/Doctors,

We hope all is well with you. We like to convey our best wishes and a very prosperous and happy New Year to you. We have been passing through the winter season. Tough on joints affects many elderly persons as well as others during the winter season. Cold air, reduced movement, low vitamin D levels resulting from less bright sunlight, and other factors contribute to this.



Here we point out some of the tips, as advised by the experts, to keep your joints workable. One, cover as many joints as you can. Cover knees, hips, and can use pads to give warm compression to ease blood flow and stiffness. Two, do some exercises and keep moving indoors or outdoors. Three, maintain quality and timely sleep, and keep your rooms warm. Fourthly, you need proper nutrition, and for that, eat meals rich in calcium, omega-3 fatty acids, green and leafy vegetables, nuts, and healthy fat support. Fifthly, try to stay hydrated by drinking the required amount of water, which may help lubricate your joint cartilage. Sixthly, to lower the stiffness of joints warm bath and the use of a heat pack can relax muscles and enhance blood flow, which gives relief to your joints.

We now like to raise a very burning and important health issue in India. This is leprosy. Even today, India is the worst sufferer of leprosy. About 57% of leprosy cases worldwide are in India. The chances of having more cases are present in India due to its people's genetic predisposition and living in unsanitary conditions. In India, there are many wrong ideas about leprosy. A few weeks ago, in the direction of the Supreme Court, the NHRC submitted documents that mentioned 97 central and State laws continue to contain provisions that discriminate against persons with leprosy. Ignorance about this disease is so deep that the patients and their family members experience social exclusion, although it is quite a curable disease and not easily spread to others. We have discussed leprosy in detail in Story 1. This is more relevant now as judges of the Supreme Court directed all States and Union territories to submit reports detailing the steps that they have initiated in controlling the disease and increasing social awareness to minimize social discrimination of the patients suffering from leprosy.

Story 2 touches upon a new study that has found how a common virus is responsible for triggering the autoimmune response in lupus. Hope these stories will be valuable for you.

Again, with our best wishes for the New Year!

With regards,

Sanjib Acharya

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**Leprosy - a non-contagious and fully curable disease,
damages nerves, muscles, eyes, and skin**

Story 1

Leprosy was once a mysterious disease and was feared as highly contagious and devastating. But now doctors treat it, and it is a fully curable disease. There are about 2.5 lakh people each year who are diagnosed with leprosy around the world. India is the most affected country in this disease.

Leprosy or also called Hansen's disease, is a bacterial infection. It affects nerves, muscles, eyes, skin and respiratory tract. It can even cause permanent paralysis, blindness and damage to hands, feet and face unless treated fully. The scientists are not fully confirmed about the cause of leprosy. It is thought that it is transmitted through airborne droplets of the affected person's coughs and sneezing over a long period. It is not easily spread from one affected person to another. Interestingly, one affected person is not contagious and can live an active life during and after the treatment.

Symptoms of leprosy

It includes patches of skin, often with raised edges. These might be discoloured, pale, red, thick, stiff or swollen. Also, there may be red and purple nodules or lumps. These are painless ulcers or sores on the bottom of one's feet. Enlarged nerves can also occur. In many cases, weakness or even paralysis is also seen, and eyebrows may disappear. Leprosy develops slowly; it may take several years or even decades to show symptoms after infection.

Diagnosis

It needs a physical examination. Doctors examine skin and nerve conditions through a skin biopsy. Patients need to have blood tests to perform tests for nerves and muscles. Patients may have tuberculoid leprosy, that is, mild symptoms with a few areas of pale or reddish skin. It may be lepromatous leprosy, that is, with



widespread sores and lesions affecting parts of the body. There may be borderline leprosy, which falls in between these two types.

Management and Treatment

The treatment of leprosy involves a combination of antibiotics, known as multidrug therapy or MDT, to kill the bacteria. The World Health Organisation provides MDT free of charge globally. The antibiotics to treat the disease include Dapsone, Rifampin, and Clofazimine. A patient has to take these medications for six to 12 months. At times, one needs to undergo surgery to remove nodules and help with nerve damage. A patient needs to begin treatment right from the diagnosis to get the full benefit of the treatment. The patients have to continue to be monitored over the next couple of years. The longevity of a patient may be like normal person without it if he/she is diagnosed early and continues under treatment properly.



A recent study observes a link between lupus and a common virus that infects 95% of adults

Story 2

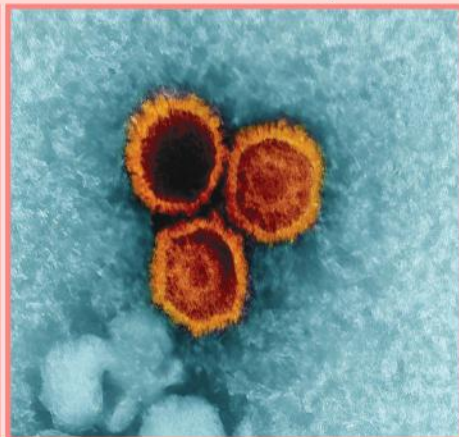
It is observed that at least five million people around the world live with lupus. Lupus is an autoimmune disease where the immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissues or organs. This causes widespread inflammation affecting joints, skin, kidneys, hearts, lungs, brains, and even blood.

The recent findings

The exact reason for lupus is unclear. It is known that certain viral infections, like Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), may be a trigger for lupus. But a new study has found evidence on how EBV may actually be the driving force behind lupus. The study was done by the immunology and rheumatology department at Stanford University. William Robinson, professor of medicine at this University and author of the new study published in the Science Translational Medicine journal, reportedly talked to Medical News Today (19th November, 2025) about the recent research. He said that for decades, epidemiologic and immunologic studies had shown unusually strong associations between EBV and lupus. But the field lacked a mechanistic explanation. He also said that nearly all people with lupus had evidence of prior EBV infection. They generated unusually strong immune responses to EBV.

How EBV is the driving force behind lupus

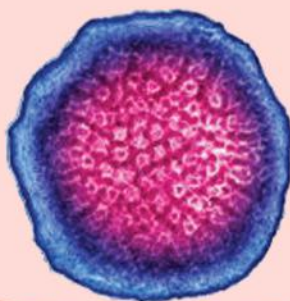
The team of researchers under the leadership of Robinson reportedly observes that EBV is a very common herpes virus that is transmitted by saliva. Most people are infected as children or as teenagers- EBV is the cause of mono- and approximately 95% of people worldwide are infected by the time they are adults. After infection, EBV does not go away. Instead, it hides inside a very small number of B cells. These are the immune cells that make antibodies, according to Robinson. Most of the time, these infected B cells remain quiet. But in some people, EBV reprogrammes these cells, changing their behaviour about how they interact



with other immune cells and what antigen they present.

The team also observes that there are fewer than 1 in 10,000 EBV-infected B cells containing a dormant EBV genome. But importantly, in people with lupus, the number of EBV-infected B cells increased to approximately 1 in 400, which is 25 times higher. This is a striking and unexpected result, according to Robinson.

This virus infects almost everyone— and it may lead to lupus.





CSR Activities & Events of **SERUM** throughout December, 2025



Dec 7: Mega rally for AIDS & thalassemia awareness and blood donation

Annual General Meeting, 2025



Dec 13: Malda HQ & Part Murshidabad



Dec 14: North Bengal & Lower Assam



Dec 19: Cuttack, Odisha



Dec 21: North 24pgs



Dec 21: Hooghly



Dec 21: Chingrighata



An initiative of **SERUM Analysis Centre (P) Ltd.**

This is a Medical Bulletin. Edited, compiled & published by Editorial Board for and on behalf of S. Serum Analysis Centre (P) Ltd., 82/4B, Bidhan Sarani, Kolkata 700004. Chief Editor: Sanjib Acharya. Website: serumanalysiscentre.com e-Mail: serum.kol@gmail.com Phone: +91 62895 32188 / 98302 74990 / 98300 16594

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