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Chronic Immunosuppression in the Mature Patient

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Title: Chronic Immunosuppression in the Mature Patient

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Abstract:

In the ever-aging population of the world, the field of geriatrics continues to grow in importance. As human beings age, the skin undergoes a unique array of changes which predispose it to a specific set of dermatoses, infections, and neoplasms. Some of these physiologic alterations are comparable to the changes that happen in immunosuppressed individuals. Given the importance of immunosuppressive medications in treatment of many common skin conditions, we have reviewed the current literature to assist the practicing clinician in using immunosuppressive medications in the geriatric population.

Common Geriatric Skin Problems*Introduction to Skin Aging*

Aging is an inevitable process that involves all organ systems including the skin¹. Over time, regular skin function declines resulting in physical changes, such as roughness and wrinkling. Other changes include loss of elasticity, thinning of the skin, xerosis, easy tearing, and traumatic purpura. These are due to a decrease in cell replacement capacity, barrier function, and immune responsiveness. Wound healing, thermoregulation and sensory perception are also disrupted with age, as well as, sweat, sebum and vitamin D production². All of these contribute to the skin's loss of integrity and can lead to atypical presentations of dermatologic diseases^{3,4}. Individuals over 65

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