

Unexpected Blistering:
A Personal Account of Pemphigus
by
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I wait. I watch. My mind reacts off emotional, spiritual, and social distress. Different stages, different appearances, all depends on how it attacks my body...and it will attack. This life-threatening illness, even concurrent with restorative, life-prolonging therapies are only temporary solutions once the illness takes control of cognitive strife. This illness is pemphigus and I CAN beat it.

A rare autoimmune illness known simply in short form as **pemphigus**, causes abnormal mucous membranes that lead to lesions internally and potentially externally on the body. Paraneoplastic pemphigus, for example causes a loss of fluids through the skin and electrolyte imbalance, just a few examples that can severely impact a person's organs and glands. The different forms of pemphigus are distinguished by their clinical features, autoantibody results or biopsy of a lesion.

Pemphigus normally affects men and women equally in their 50s and 60s, and in rare cases will affect children. Pemphigus vulgaris is the most common form of pemphigus and is the most common form in Europe and the United States. The National Institute of Health shows statistical Pemphigus is estimated to affect anywhere from 0.7-5 people per 1,000,000 per year ([S M Langan, 2008](#)) with lower percentages of mortality due to the primary treatment allowed in both the United States and in Europe: Rituxan. Rituxan is given intravenously and is still the only known pharmaceutical that can put pemphigus into remission. While the illness itself is harsh on the body the drugs can also cause severe side effects as well. Many patients are treated with both Rituxan and prednisone. Prednisone is an additional therapy and normally given in the initial phase of pemphigus. Both pharmaceuticals can assist with keeping the pemphigus in remission with a lesser percentage of mortality The Rituxan treatments success has staved off many imminent deaths that can result from pemphigus illnesses.

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