What is Relapsing Polychondritis?

Relapsing polychondritis (RP) is a systemic inflammatory disease of unknown etiology that can be fatal. The disease affects multiple organs, particularly cartilaginous structures such as the ears, nose, airway and joints as well as eyes, skin, vasculature, heart valves and brain.

Diagnosing Relapsing Polychondritis

- Relapsing polychondritis (RP) is extremely difficult to diagnose.¹
- There is no available blood test to make the diagnosis.
- The diagnosis is based on clinical symptoms and signs that fit the pattern consistent with RP.
- If RP is not diagnosed early and treated effectively, there can be irreversible damage and long-term complications.²⁺³

Symptoms of RP are Variable and May Include:

- General malaise, low grade fever, loss of appetite
- Redness and pain on the eyes
- Inflammation, redness, swelling and/or pain in outer (cartilaginous) portions of the ear.
- Sore throat, anterior neck pain, hoarseness
- Shortness of breath, wheezing, dry cough
- Hearing loss, tinnitus, dizziness
- Pain and redness on the nose
- Skin lesions
- Joint pain and swelling
- Rib pain, sternum pain

Possible Complications

- Disability⁴⁺⁴
- Tracheomalacia and bronchomalacia⁶
- Ear and nose deformities⁹
- Subglottic stenosis⁷⁺⁸
- Hearing loss¹⁰

Citations