Sjögren's Disease

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Why in News?

Recently, researchers in Japan have identified a self-perpetuating interaction between different types of immune cells that helps maintain autoimmune activity in people with Sjögren's disease.

- **Sjögren's disease** – It is a long-term autoimmune condition in which the immune system mistakenly attacks the body's own moisture-producing glands.
- The disease mainly affects the glands responsible for producing tears, saliva, and sweat, although it can also involve other organs and tissues throughout the body.
- It is also known as *Sjögren's syndrome.*
- **Causes –** The precise cause of Sjögren's syndrome remains unknown, but genetic factors are believed to play a role.
- Researchers also suspect that certain triggers—including viral infections, emotional or physical stress, and hormonal changes—may contribute to the development or worsening of symptoms.
- The condition can occur at any age; however, it is most commonly diagnosed in individuals over the age of 40.
- **Prevalence** – Approximately *90% of adults diagnosed with Sjögren's syndrome are women.*
- Sjögren's may develop on its own or alongside other autoimmune disorders, particularly lupus and rheumatoid arthritis (RA).
- **Symptoms**
- Dry eyes that may feel painful, burning, itchy, or gritty
- Dry mouth, which can make swallowing, speaking, or eating dry foods difficult
- Swelling of glands in the face and neck region
- Some individuals may also experience:
    - Joint pain, swelling, and stiffness
    - Dry skin or skin rashes
    - Vaginal dryness
    - A persistent dry cough
    - Ongoing fatigue
- In certain cases, the disease can affect internal organs such as the liver and kidneys.
- A small number of patients may also develop lymphoma, a cancer affecting the lymphatic system.
- **Treatment –** Currently, there is no cure for Sjögren's syndrome.
- Treatment focuses on managing symptoms, particularly chronic dryness of the eyes

and mouth.
- This is typically achieved by improving lubrication and moisture in the affected tissues to help reduce discomfort and improve quality of life.

Reference

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