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KIDNEY CENTER

Podcast Transcript:

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“Is disease in another organ an indicator of the underlying disease?”

So the question is, and specific: lung function is deteriorating, but there’s no good way of ascertaining why lung function is deteriorating. Is a marker of disease in another organ a good way of telling? That’s the question.

In general when flares occur, they typically occur in organs in which the disease has already attacked. So for example, if you’ve had skin disease, it’s not uncommon for the rash to come back. If you’ve had arthritic complaints, it’s not uncommon for the arthritic complaints to come back. If you’ve had lung disease and kidney disease, and you can’t tell whether the lung capacity is decreasing, but in fact there are more red blood cells in the urine-and that’s the test that I think is a better, more sensitive marker. Or your kidney function test is going downhill. It should make your treating physician become more neurotic than they normally are.

But scarring occurs in all organs. And scarring begets more scar. So in fact, diminished lung capacity may be a progressive function, not of the underlying disease, but as a consequence of scarring of areas previously injured, or infection on top of that original scar, or increased body weight that actually compresses lung function. Or, in fact, problems in the upper respiratory area that require attention. So the issue there has to be, is this again, is this a flare or is this symptom, this clinical problem a consequence, not of the underlying disease, but in fact a consequence of something else? And that is an issue that all of us face and have to deal with regularly.