



Drug-Induced Photosensitivity—An Update: Culprit Drugs, Prevention and Management

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Abstract

Photosensitive drug eruptions are cutaneous adverse events due to exposure to a medication and either ultraviolet or visible radiation. In this review, the diagnosis, prevention and management of drug-induced photosensitivity is discussed. Diagnosis is based largely on the history of drug intake and the appearance of the eruption primarily affecting sun-exposed areas of the skin. This diagnosis can also be aided by tools such as phototesting, photopatch testing and rechallenge testing. The mainstay of management is prevention, including informing patients of the possibility of increased photosensitivity as well as the use of appropriate sun protective measures. Once a photosensitivity reaction has occurred, it may be necessary to discontinue the culprit medication and treat the reaction with corticosteroids. For certain medications, long-term surveillance may be indicated because of a higher risk of developing melanoma or squamous cell carcinoma at sites of earlier photosensitivity reactions. A large number of medications have been implicated as causes of photosensitivity, many with convincing clinical and scientific supporting evidence. We review the medical literature regarding the evidence for the culpability of each drug, including the results of phototesting, photopatch testing and rechallenge testing. Amiodarone, chlorpromazine, doxycycline, hydrochlorothiazide, nalidixic acid, naproxen, piroxicam, tetracycline, thioridazine, vemurafenib and voriconazole are among the most consistently implicated and warrant the most precaution by both the physician and patient.

Key Points

Photosensitive drug eruptions, including both phototoxicity and photoallergy, have been reported for a number of systemic medications.

This review provides a comprehensive overview of medications implicated in such reactions, including the clinical presentation for each medication and the evidence available to implicate them as true photosensitizers.

Improved reporting, including randomized control trials, will help to better characterize these reactions and provide a more comprehensive list of photosensitive medications for both the physician and patient.

1 Introduction

Photosensitive drug eruptions have been reported to represent up to 8% of cutaneous adverse events from drugs [1]. Such reactions, which can be classified as either photoallergic or phototoxic, occur after exposure to a photosensitizing drug, either topically or systemically, and either ultraviolet (UV) or visible radiation. Importantly, for a drug eruption to be considered photosensitive, it must meet the following criteria: (1) it occurs only in the context of radiation, (2) the drug or one of its metabolites must be present in the skin at the time of exposure to radiation and (3) the drug and/or its metabolite(s) must be able to absorb either visible or UV radiation. UVA radiation, which penetrates deeper into the dermis than UVB, is most commonly implicated in photosensitive drug eruptions, although UVB and visible light have been reported for specific medications [2].

Classically, photosensitivity reactions are classified based on their proposed mechanism of action into photoallergic and phototoxic reactions (Table 1). Attempts to distinguish the two can be made using clinical history and physical examination, as well as histopathology and clinical tests including phototesting and photopatch testing. However, distinguishing between phototoxicity and photoallergy in

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Table 1 Differentiating features between photoallergic and phototoxic drug-induced photosensitivity (adapted from Gould et al. [88])

Feature	Photoallergy	Phototoxicity
Incidence	Low	High
Pathophysiology	Type IV hypersensitivity reaction	Direct tissue injury
Required dose of medication	Low	Usual dose to high
Required dose of radiation	Low	High
Onset after light exposure	> 24 h	< 24 h
Clinical appearance	Eczematous	Exaggerated sunburn reaction
Sensitization required	Yes	No
Localization	May spread outside exposed areas	Only exposed areas
Pigmentary change	Unusual	Frequent
Histology	Epidermal spongiosis, exocytosis of lymphocytes and a perivascular inflammatory infiltrate	Necrotic keratinocytes, predominantly lymphocytic and neutrophilic dermal infiltrate

an individual patient can be difficult, and usually does not affect management.

Photoallergic drug eruptions, in addition to meeting all the criteria for photosensitivity reactions outlined above, must demonstrate an immune-mediated mechanism of action. Similar to other type IV hypersensitivity reactions, not all persons exposed concurrently to both the drug and to radiation will experience the photosensitivity reaction. When a susceptible person does display a photoallergic reaction, typically it will present clinically as a predominantly eczematous eruption. Histopathologic features are identical to those seen in an allergic contact dermatitis, including epidermal spongiosis, vesiculation, exocytosis of lymphocytes and a perivascular inflammatory infiltrate [3].

Phototoxic drug eruptions are much more frequent than photoallergic reactions. Phototoxic drug eruptions are not immune-mediated, but instead result from direct cellular damage. As such, phototoxic reactions will occur in all individuals exposed to sufficient doses of both the drug and radiation of the appropriate wavelengths. Classically, phototoxic eruptions appear as exaggerated sunburn reactions with erythema, itching and burning. Histopathologically, necrotic keratinocytes are seen along with a predominantly lymphocytic and neutrophilic dermal infiltrate. Of note, both phototoxic and photoallergic drug eruptions may have a dermatitic appearance. Other manifestations of photosensitivity can include lichenoid eruptions, pseudoporphyria, onycholysis, erythema multiforme, hyperpigmentation and telangiectasia, as will be discussed in more detail with the various culprit medications below.

Not only are photosensitive reactions a cause of significant morbidity in affected individuals, but in some instances, pose a future risk for malignancy, specifically melanoma and keratinocyte carcinoma [4–9]. As such, awareness of these culprit drugs, and using appropriate measures to avoid

these adverse reactions, is an important aspect of patient care when using photosensitizing medications.

In this review, which is an update from our original article published in 2011 [10], we discuss the diagnosis of photosensitivity reactions, culprit drugs, as well as prevention and management of these eruptions. We have not included reactions to topically administered drugs (e.g. sunscreens), and instead focus on reactions to systemically administered medications. We have also excluded drugs that cause photosensitivity as part of their desired mechanism of action (e.g. psoralens).

2 Diagnosis

Most cases of drug-induced photosensitivity can be diagnosed based on a detailed clinical history and physical examination, as well as knowledge of the classic groups of medications typically implicated in such reactions. That is, specialized testing is not necessary to make the diagnosis for most patients. However, investigations including phototesting may be important to differentiate drug-induced photosensitivity from other causes of photosensitivity, particularly where the relationship between onset of photosensitivity and drug ingestion is not clear. For patients with a suspected photosensitivity eruption, as with any dermatologic presentation, a thorough clinical history and physical examination should be performed. The interviewer should pay particular attention to medication history, with special consideration given to the temporal relationship of the eruption with the starting of any new medications. Additionally, a general review of systems should be performed to screen for diseases associated with photosensitivity, such as systemic lupus erythematosus. With photosensitive reactions, physical examination will often reveal a photodistributed eruption involving the face, V of the neck and extensor

forearms and hands. Areas typically spared include the upper eyelids, the base of skin folds (e.g. nasolabial folds), as well as the submental and posterior auricular regions, as these areas are relatively protected from sun exposure. In cases where there is no prior literature to support a photosensitive reaction to a given medication or where the diagnosis itself is in question, testing exists that may help to establish a diagnosis. Although several *in vitro* tests to assess the photosensitizing potential of certain medications in cultured cells exist [11–13], these are not practical or routinely available in the clinical setting. Clinically, the two tests that have proven most useful are phototesting and photopatch testing. With phototesting, the examiner uses artificial sources of UVB and UVA radiation to determine the minimal erythema dose (MED) for a patient under two conditions, while taking the medication in question and then following discontinuation of the medication. The MED is the lowest dose of radiation to produce uniform erythema on an exposed patch of skin. If the MED is lower while the patient is taking the medication, this supports compatibility with a drug-induced photosensitive eruption. Alternatively, photopatch testing is used to determine if a photoallergic reaction has occurred. The procedure is similar to patch testing used to assess allergic contact dermatitis. In photopatch testing, the examiner applies the medication in question, compounded in either petrolatum or alcohol, to the patient's back in duplicate. After 24 h, one set is irradiated with a dose of UVA below the MED. Twenty-four hours later, the irradiated and non-irradiated sites are examined for erythema, edema and vesiculation. If there is a reaction only at the irradiated site, it is suggestive of a photoallergic reaction. If there are equal reactions at both the irradiated and non-irradiated sites, it is suggestive of an allergic contact dermatitis to the medication. If there is a reaction at both the irradiated and non-irradiated sites, but the reaction is greater at the irradiated site, there may be both a contact dermatitis and a photoallergic reaction.

Obvious limitations exist with photopatch testing. Difficulties in interpretation of a positive reaction may arise when studying a medication in a topical formulation that is generally used systemically. Photopatch testing for the diagnosis of photo-induced cutaneous eruptions due to systemic medications has not been validated and may be negative even where the causative relationship between the drug and the photo-induced eruption is clear [14]. Thus, photopatch testing is most often reserved for topically applied medications and components of sunscreens. Quinine and chlorpromazine are among the few systemic medications where photopatch testing has been validated and is routinely performed. Photoscratch testing is a similar but less commonly used testing method that involves scratching the skin with a needle containing the compound for testing. Again, this method has been reported to have a high false-positive

rate secondary to skin irritation [15] and is not validated for the majority of medications discussed in this review.

3 Photosensitizing Drugs

In this updated narrative review, we discuss the drugs that have been reported, in the English-language medical literature, to cause clinical photosensitivity. PubMed was the primary search engine utilized, and articles were filtered using the key search terms 'drug-induced photosensitivity', 'drug-induced photoallergy' and 'drug-induced phototoxicity'. Once articles were obtained, more specific searches including drug name (e.g. 'voriconazole and drug-induced photosensitivity') were also performed for each culprit medication.

As mentioned in our 2011 review, there are significant challenges associated with ascertaining the incidence of photosensitivity reactions to systemic medications. Such reactions are largely underreported, particularly for drugs that have been on the market for many years and are known photosensitizers. The literature describing photosensitivity reactions from systemic medications predominantly consists of case reports and case series. These comprise the majority of the data included in this review. More randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trials of possible photosensitizing medications using phototesting to detect changes in the MED to UVA would support clinical knowledge of a drug's photosensitizing potential. While this would greatly benefit this field and provide a more solid framework for patient education around specific medications and their potential adverse reactions, it is likely not a realistic proposition. However, improved reporting of cutaneous adverse events in randomized controlled trials, particularly distinguishing photosensitivity from the more generic 'rash', is more realistic and would be beneficial.

In light of these limitations, Table 2 contains a list of medications that are, in our opinion, important or common causes of photosensitivity. This list was derived based on the data compiled from this study as well as our clinical experience in the field. Importantly, this list is consistent with other studies on this topic, including a large systematic review recently published on drug-induced phototoxicity [16]. Tables 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 list medications, divided by therapeutic class, that have been reported to cause photosensitivity. For each medication listed, the evidence for its culpability in causing a photosensitivity eruption is given (whether phototesting, photopatch testing, or rechallenge testing was positive). We consider photopatch testing and rechallenge testing to be the strongest evidence available. Additionally, for each medication presented, the phototoxic or photoallergic clinical manifestations are discussed to better direct the physician when evaluating a patient with a suspected photosensitivity reaction.

Table 2 Common photosensitizing medications according to the authors' experience and literature review (in alphabetical order)

Amiodarone
Chlorpromazine
Doxycycline
Hydrochlorothiazide
Nalidixic acid
Naproxen
Piroxicam
Tetracycline
Thioridazine
Vemurafenib
Voriconazole

3.1 Antimicrobials

3.1.1 Tetracyclines

Tetracyclines are broad-spectrum antimicrobial agents exhibiting activity against a wide range of gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria, atypical organisms such as chlamydia, mycoplasma, rickettsia and protozoan parasites. They are perhaps the best recognized class of medications to cause photo-induced drug eruptions. Tetracycline and doxycycline have been reported to cause a variety of photosensitive rashes ranging from mild sunburn-like reactions with erythema and burning in sun-exposed areas to more widespread photodermatitis [17, 18]. Less frequently, solar urticaria [19], actinic granuloma [20] or lichenoid reactions [21] have been reported. In addition to skin manifestations, these medications are also reported to cause nail dystrophy with photo-induced onycholysis (i.e., nail plate detachment) and dyschromia. Minocycline is generally not considered to be a significant cause of photosensitivity, however photo-onycholysis has been reported [22]. Photo-induced onycholysis has now been reported for tetracycline [23–25], doxycycline [17, 26], minocycline [22] and lymecycline [27]. In children, severe cases of doxycycline-induced photo-onycholysis have been reported with involvement of all 20 nails [28] and at doses as low as 20 mg per day [29]. Importantly, nail effects can be delayed in presentation up to 2 weeks following sun exposure [30].

At least for doxycycline, phototoxic eruptions are thought to be due to radiation in the UVA1 spectrum (340–400 nm) and appear to be dose dependent [31]. Studies from the UK have demonstrated that phototoxicity to doxycycline occurs at single doses of 100, 150 and 200 mg at rates of 3, 20 and 42%, respectively [31]. The true incidence of photosensitive reactions in patients taking tetracycline class antibiotics is difficult to ascertain, as these reactions are felt to be underreported. For doxycycline, the incidence reported in the literature range from as low as 3% [31] to as high as 16% [32].

Skin cancer risk associated with use of these medications has been explored. In a study based on two large US cohorts, tetracycline use increased the risk of basal cell carcinoma

by 11%, with no significant increase in the risk of squamous cell carcinoma or melanoma [33].

3.1.2 Nalidixic Acid and Fluoroquinolones

The antibiotic nalidixic acid and its derivatives, the fluoroquinolones, are believed to cause both phototoxic and photoallergic eruptions [34–37]; however, the incidence and severity of reactions differ greatly between the various members of this class.

Nalidixic acid is a known photosensitizer, and one of the medications associated with the development of fragile skin and the characteristic blistering of pseudoporphyria in sun-exposed areas [34, 37–39]. However, the clinical manifestations of fluoroquinolone phototoxicity are poorly detailed in the literature. Biochemical studies have demonstrated that derivatives of this class of medications that contain a halogen group at their position 8, including sparfloxacin, lomefloxacin and clinafloxacin, were found to have the greatest phototoxic properties [40–45]. Alternatively, those with a hydrogen group at this position, including ciprofloxacin and levofloxacin, have only mild phototoxic potential [41, 44, 46, 47]. Finally, those with a methoxy group at this position, as is the case with moxifloxacin, are more photostable and the least phototoxic [48, 49]. This is reflected in clinical studies that have demonstrated that some of the most frequently prescribed fluoroquinolones, including ciprofloxacin, levofloxacin and moxifloxacin, have very low photosensitizing potential when administered to healthy patients [46, 48, 50, 51]. When photosensitivity to a fluoroquinolone does occur, there is typically a return to baseline 1 week after the drug has been discontinued. However, persistent sequelae from phototoxicity have been reported secondary to the use of ciprofloxacin in a lung-transplant recipient on long-term immunosuppressive therapy [52]. Case reports of photo-induced purpura have been reported secondary to the use of both ciprofloxacin [53] and levofloxacin [54]. One case-control study including 1318 melanoma patients and 6786 controls found that quinolone use was associated with an increased risk of melanoma (odds ratio 1.33; 95% confidence interval 1.01–1.76) [55]. Further studies are required to establish whether this association is causal and specifically whether it is related to the phototoxic properties of quinolones.

3.1.3 Other Antibacterial Agents

Cefotaxime and ceftazidime, third-generation cephalosporins, have been implicated in photo-induced drug eruptions [56, 57]. In the case of cefotaxime, photosensitivity manifested as photodistributed telangiectasia, while ceftazidime caused increased susceptibility to sunburn.

Table 3 Antimicrobial medications reported to cause photosensitive drug eruptions

Subclass	Drug	Evidence
Tetracyclines	Tetracycline	PT [19]
	Doxycycline	PT [18], PP [18], RC [18]
	Minocycline	–
	Lymecycline	–
Nalidixic acid and the fluoroquinolones	Nalidixic acid	PT [37]
	Ciprofloxacin	PT [46]
	Sparfloxacin	PT [45]
	Ofloxacin	PT [47]
	Lomefloxacin	PP [43], RC [43], PT [48]
	Levofloxacin	–
	Moxifloxacin	–
	Clinafloxacin	–
Beta-lactams	Cefotaxime	PT [56]
	Ceftazidime	–
Miscellaneous antibiotics	Dapsone	PP [62], RC [59, 61, 63]
	Trimethoprim	RC [64]
Antituberculous	Isoniazid	PP [65], RC [65]
	Pyrazinamide	RC [66]
Antifungals	Voriconazole	PT [74]
	Itraconazole	PT [78], RC [78]
	Ketoconazole	–
	Griseofulvin	PT [82]
	Terbinafine	PT [87]
	Antimalarials	Quinine
Quinidine		PP [166], PT [163], RC [163]
Chloroquine		PT [99], PP [99]
Hydroxychloroquine		PT [97, 98], PP [98]
Atoraquone/proguanil (Malarone)		PP [100]
Antiretrovirals	Efavirenz	PT [105], PP [105, 106]
	Tenofovir	PP [108]

PP photopatch testing, PT phototesting, RC rechallenge, – indicates test not done or test negative

Dapsone is a sulfone antibiotic and anti-inflammatory agent that has been implicated in both phototoxic and photoallergic drug eruptions [58–62]. This has been confirmed both by oral drug rechallenge and photopatch testing [61–63]. Trimethoprim, an antibiotic often used in combination with sulfamethoxazole, has also been reported to cause photosensitive in a single case report with positive rechallenge data [64].

Isoniazid and pyrazinamide, antibiotics used in the treatment of tuberculosis, have been implicated in causing photosensitive dermatoses. Isoniazid may cause a lichenoid eruption, and its photosensitizing effects have been confirmed by photopatch and rechallenge testing [65]. Pyrazinamide photosensitivity has been confirmed by rechallenge testing [66].

3.1.4 Antifungals

Voriconazole is a broad-spectrum triazole antifungal agent used in the treatment of invasive fungal infections. Although it is typically well tolerated, serious side effects including photosensitivity reactions have been reported. In fact, a recent literature review reported that voriconazole is the second most commonly reported culprit in phototoxicity reactions [16].

Reports of voriconazole photosensitivity range from classic phototoxicity patterns, to cheilitis, pseudoporphyria and photo-onycholysis [67–75]. The majority of reports in the literature occur in patients receiving long-term prophylactic therapy, with photosensitive eruptions occurring months after starting voriconazole therapy. While the acute photodermatitis usually resolves on discontinuation of the

drug, there are multiple reports of photoaging as well as the development of melanoma and squamous cell carcinomas in areas previously affected by the photosensitive eruption [6, 8, 9]. Importantly, these sequelae have been reported in paediatric patients treated with voriconazole [76, 77] and represent an important aspect of ongoing surveillance for these patients.

Itraconazole, another triazole antifungal agent, has also been reported to cause photosensitivity in a predominantly phototoxic pattern [78, 79]. The report detailed erythema, edema and vesicles on sun-exposed areas following a 5-day course of oral therapy for candidiasis that could be reproduced on rechallenge. Photodermatitis has also been reported with ketoconazole [80] but not fluconazole. One patient developed a phototoxic response to voriconazole that cleared within 6 weeks of substitution to fluconazole, suggesting potentially little or no cross-reactivity of this adverse photosensitive reaction [72].

Other than the azoles, few photosensitive reactions have been reported for other antimycotics. Griseofulvin is not thought to be a potent photosensitizer although it has been reported in the literature [81–83]. UVA has been implicated in griseofulvin-induced photosensitivity that may interfere with porphyrin metabolism, although further studies are required to confirm this theory [84–86]. There is also a single case report describing the development of solar urticaria in a patient taking terbinafine [87].

3.1.5 Antimalarials

Quinine and quinidine have been reported to cause both photoallergic and phototoxic reactions [88]. Quinine causes a photosensitive dermatosis that has been described as having several different morphological appearances including edematous, eczematous and lichenoid. Photo-onycholysis has also been described [89–94]. Photosensitivity from quinine may be persistent, which has been demonstrated experimentally and clinically [90, 91]. In the 1987 study by Ferguson et al., both patients who underwent photochallenge testing had a positive reaction. While it has not been seen clinically, experimental data from photopatch testing suggest that quinine and quinidine may cross-react with regard to photosensitivity [95].

Chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine are antimalarial drugs often used in dermatology for their photoprotective effects in photosensitive conditions such as polymorphous light eruption and systemic lupus erythematosus. Paradoxically, rare reports have been published confirming drug-induced photodermatoses induced by these medications, confirmed by phototesting and photopatch testing

[96–99]. These reactions typically occur within days to weeks of starting these medications and resolve after discontinuation.

Most recently, a phototoxic reaction has been reported for the combination of atovaquone and proguanil (Malarone), a medication commonly prescribed for malaria prophylaxis [100]. In this case report, the patient developed blisters and skin sloughing only involving sun-exposed skin within hours of exposure, with resolution within days of discontinuation of the medication. Subsequent photopatch testing confirmed the diagnosis.

3.1.6 Antiretrovirals

A variety of photosensitive eruptions have been reported to occur in patients with HIV, including polymorphous light eruption, porphyria cutanea tarda, actinic prurigo and chronic actinic dermatitis, photosensitive granuloma annulare and lichenoid photoeruption. These reactions can occur in the setting of HIV, independent of any medications [101, 102]. As such, elucidating the role of antiretrovirals in HIV-associated photodermatoses can be challenging.

Efavirenz is a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor used in the treatment of HIV infection. Efavirenz-induced photosensitivity has been reported [103–106] and confirmed by photopatch testing, evidence that efavirenz, and perhaps other antiretroviral medications, may be the culprit in some cases of photosensitivity associated with HIV. Other reports have suggested the possible association between antiretroviral therapy and other photo-induced reactions, including a porphyria cutanea tarda-like blistering eruption [107], although these reports lack photopatch testing or rechallenge evidence. Tenofovir has also been confirmed to cause a photosensitive eruption in a single patient as confirmed by histopathology and photopatch testing [108].

3.2 Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs

The non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are a heterogeneous class of medications that act by inhibiting prostaglandin synthesis and are used for a variety of symptoms including pain, inflammation and fever. Photosensitivity has been reported with a number of NSAIDs. Historically, photosensitivity was reported most commonly with benoxaprofen and piroxicam [109, 110]. In the past, it was reported that over 50% of the adverse reactions associated with benoxaprofen were photosensitive and often severe. In one patient, histologic examination of a biopsy from a sun-exposed area showed deep cutaneous injury with prominent

sweat gland necrosis. Because of the adverse effects associated with its use, benoxaprofen was withdrawn from the market in the early 1980s. Piroxicam, which is still available on the market, has been reported to cause photosensitivity including vesiculobullous, eczematous and lichenoid reactions [110–112].

Among commonly used NSAIDs, naproxen appears to have the most photosensitizing potential. Patients most often present with pseudoporphyria [113–115], although more typical phototoxic reactions, as well as erythema multiforme and lichenoid eruptions, have also been reported [109, 116, 117]. Multiple reports comment on similar phototoxic reactions with oxaprozin [114, 118], nabumetone [114, 119], ampiroxicam [120], tiaprofenic acid [109], sulindac [110] and meclofenamide sodium [110]. Diclofenac, although not reported to cause skin eruptions, has been reported to cause photo-onycholysis [121]. Ibuprofen is not considered to be a potent photosensitizer, and to date, only one case report documenting a photosensitive reaction in a patient on this medication has been reported [122]. Interestingly, subsequent testing found this patient to have a decreased MED to the UVA spectrum while taking ibuprofen; however, photopatch testing was negative. Celecoxib, a cyclooxygenase 2 inhibitor, has also been reported to cause photoallergic reactions and pseudoporphyria [113, 123, 124]. Photopatch testing was carried out in one patient but again was negative.

A recent study found an increased risk of cutaneous melanoma in those taking NSAIDs, and it has been proposed that this is related to their phototoxic potential [55]. However, results in the literature are mixed, including some studies that have found protective effects of NSAIDs on skin cancer risk; in a systematic review and meta-analysis, no association was seen between NSAID use and melanoma [125].

Table 4 NSAIDs reported to cause photosensitive drug eruptions

Drug	Evidence
Piroxicam	PP [112]
Naproxen	PP [117], PT [92]
Oxaprozin	–
Nabumetone	–
Ampiroxicam	PP [120]
Tiaprofenic acid	–
Sulindac	–
Meclofenamide sodium	–
Diclofenac	–
Indomethacin	PP [110], RC [110]
Ibuprofen	RC [122]
Celecoxib	–

PP photopatch testing, PT phototesting, RC rechallenge, – indicates test not done or test negative

3.3 Antihypertensives

3.3.1 Diuretics

Thiazides are some of the most commonly prescribed diuretics, first coming to market in the 1950s. Shortly after their introduction, reports of photosensitivity reactions were documented. The most commonly reported culprit is hydrochlorothiazide, with over 60 cases published to date [126] including exaggerated sunburn reactions, eczematous lesions in a photodistributed pattern, lichenoid eruptions and photoleukoderma [4, 127, 128]. Importantly, chronic eczematous photosensitivity has been reported lasting months to years after discontinuation of the drug [129]. Such patients have been successfully treated with PUVA. In some of the reports, photobiological studies were included, suggesting that thiazide photosensitivity can be elicited by both UVA and UVB. Positive photopatch testing to hydrochlorothiazide has been reported, and in some cases the results of phototesting were normal with only photopatch testing yielding abnormal results [126, 130].

Indapamide, a thiazide-like diuretic, has not been reported to cause cutaneous phototoxicity reactions, although photo-onycholysis has been described [131]. Phototesting and photopatch results have been negative.

Table 5 Antihypertensive medications reported to cause photosensitive drug eruptions

Subclass	Drug	Evidence
Diuretics	Thiazides	PP [130], PT [4, 129]
	Furosemide	RC [133]
	Indapamide	–
	Triamterene	PP [135], RC [135]
ACE inhibitors	Ramipril	PP [138]
	Enalapril	–
	Quinapril	PT [137], RC [137]
Angiotensin receptor blockers	Valsartan	–
	Olmesartan	RC [141]
	Losartan	–
	Irbesartan	–
	Valsartan	–
	Candesartan	–
Calcium channel blockers	Telmisartan	–
	Amlodipine	PT [143]
	Nifedipine	RC [146]
	Diltiazem	PT [148], RC [149]
Beta blockers	Tilisolol	PP [150], RC [150]
Centrally acting agents	Rilmenidine	PT [151]
	Methyldopa	PP [152]

PP photopatch testing, PT phototesting, RC rechallenge, – indicates test not done or test negative

Furosemide, another popular diuretic, has also been linked to phototoxic eruptions. Unlike the thiazides, furosemide-associated photosensitivity typically presents with bullous eruptions, some mimicking a Brunsting–Perry–type presentation of localized bullous pemphigoid [132–134]. In one study, rechallenge testing was positive [133].

Other less commonly prescribed diuretics, including triamterene, a potassium sparing diuretic, have been reported to cause photosensitivity with positive photopatch testing [135].

3.3.2 ACE Inhibitors and Angiotensin Receptor Blockers

The ACE inhibitors (ACEi) and angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) are two groups of closely related anti-hypertensive medications that work primarily on the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone pathway. They are commonly used in the management of hypertension, renal failure and heart failure. Among the ACEi, ramipril, quinapril and enalapril have been reported to cause photosensitivity, with positive photopatch testing results for ramipril and rechallenge evidence for quinapril [136–139].

There are few reports in the literature of ARB-induced photosensitivity [140, 141]. However, a recent review of VigiBase, a global WHO database of individual case safety reports, identified numerous cases of probable or possible photosensitivity reactions to ARBs between 1968 and 2014 [141]. Most commonly, these reactions occurred with losartan, irbesartan and valsartan, and up to 10% have been reported as serious. Other less common culprits include olmesartan, candesartan and telmisartan. Positive rechallenge has been documented for olmesartan [141].

3.3.3 Calcium Channel Blockers

Amlodipine and nifedipine are calcium channel blockers (CCBs) in the dihydropyridine group that have been reported to cause photodistributed facial telangiectasia, a distinct photo-induced morphology, and may cross-react with each other in causing this phenomenon [142–145]. Nifedipine has also been reported to cause a photodermatitis, confirmed by rechallenge. Photopatch testing carried out on one of two patients was negative [146].

Diltiazem, a benzothiazepine CCB, has been implicated as a cause of photodistributed hyperpigmentation [147, 148]. It has also been reported to cause photosensitive dermatitis, proven by rechallenge [149].

3.3.4 Other Antihypertensive Agents

The beta blocker (β -blocker) tilisolol has been reported to cause photosensitivity in a single patient with confirmation

by rechallenge and photopatch testing [150]. To our knowledge, it is the only β -blocker that has been reported to cause photosensitivity.

Rilmenidine, a central imidazoline agonist, has been reported to cause erythema and swelling in a photodistributed pattern, again in only one patient [151].

Methyldopa, another centrally acting antihypertensive, may cause photosensitivity. A positive photopatch test response was documented in one patient [152].

Several recent studies have identified positive associations between the use of antihypertensives and the risk of cutaneous malignancy. For instance, a recent study has found an increased risk of both squamous cell carcinoma and cutaneous melanoma in people taking amiloride and hydrochlorothiazide combination therapy, and an increased risk of cutaneous melanoma in those taking indapamide [5]. It has been proposed that this is related to the phototoxic potential of these medications. A recent meta-analysis looking at the association between anti-hypertensive drugs and skin cancer risk identified that users of CCBs and β -blockers were at increased risk of skin cancer and cutaneous melanoma, respectively. However, even when positive, associations were weak. The authors identified no association between thiazide diuretics, ACEi or ARB use and skin cancer risk [153]. Additional studies are required.

3.4 Antiarrhythmics

Amiodarone is a potent class III antiarrhythmic used to prevent and treat ventricular arrhythmias and atrial fibrillation. It has a number of potential side effects including photosensitivity. In some studies, phototoxicity was seen in over 50% of patients taking amiodarone [154–156], although more recent studies suggest it occurs in closer to 7% of patients [157]. Amiodarone photosensitivity classically presents with a burning/tingling sensation in sun-exposed skin followed by the development of erythema and eczema; however, pseudoporphyria reactions have also been reported. Particularly after long-term exposure, amiodarone induces a distinctive blue-grey pigmentation on sun-exposed sites in 1–2% of patients [155, 158]. The photosensitivity usually resolves within months of discontinuation of the drug; however, persistent reactions have also been reported [159]. Photo-induced pigmentation generally fades gradually over 1–2 years [160]. UVA and UVB are both involved in amiodarone-induced photosensitivity [158, 161]. Dronedarone, a novel antiarrhythmic that is similar in composition to amiodarone, appears to be significantly less phototoxic than amiodarone. However, cases of photosensitivity have been reported [162].

Quinidine, a class I antiarrhythmic, has also been reported to cause photosensitivity presenting as an eczematous dermatitis, a lichenoid eruption or a livedoid purpuric eruption [163–165]. In one report, the histology and clinical

Table 6 Antiarrhythmic medications reported to cause photosensitive drug eruptions

Drug	Evidence
Amiodarone	PT [158, 161]
Dronedarone	–
Quinine and quinidine	See Table 3
Calcium channel blockers	See Table 5

PT phototesting, – indicates test not done or test negative

presentation were consistent with a photoallergic reaction [164]. The diagnosis was confirmed in one study by phototesting and rechallenge, and in another by photopatch testing [163, 166].

Other antiarrhythmics that cause photosensitivity, the calcium channel blockers and quinine, are discussed in earlier sections of this paper.

3.5 Cholesterol-Lowering Agents

The HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors (statins) are the most commonly prescribed lipid-lowering agents worldwide. They have been reported to cause photosensitivity, but this is not a common adverse effect of this class of medications. Simvastatin may cause a persistent photodistributed dermatitis [167, 168]. Photopatch testing and rechallenge with phototesting have both been positive for simvastatin [167, 169]. Atorvastatin has been reported to cause an edematous erythema on sun-exposed sites, proven by rechallenge [170]. Its phototoxic potential is thought to arise from singlet oxygen generation via a phenanthrene-like photoproduct [171]. Both simvastatin and pravastatin have been reported to cause photodistributed erythema multiforme [172].

Fenofibrate is a lipid-lowering agent that works by a distinct mechanism. It has been reported to cause eczematous and lichenoid photosensitivity, proven by both photopatch testing and rechallenge [173–176].

Table 7 Cholesterol-lowering medications reported to cause photosensitive drug eruptions

Subclass	Drug	Evidence
HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors (statins)	Simvastatin	PT [169, 172], PP [167, 169], RC [167]
	Atorvastatin	PT [170], RC [170]
	Pravastatin	PT [172]
Fibrates	Fenofibrate	PT [175], PP [175], RC [175]

PP photopatch testing, PT phototesting, RC rechallenge

3.6 Chemotherapeutics

3.6.1 Antimetabolite Therapies

Fluorouracil and several related compounds have been reported to cause photosensitive eruptions. Fluorouracil can cause enhanced sunburn reactions, photodistributed hyperpigmentation or polymorphous light eruption-like reactions [177]. Tegafur, a fluorouracil derivative, may cause both lichenoid and eczematous photodistributed reactions [178–180]. Rechallenge, as well as photopatch testing, has been positive, with photopatch testing being positive in only those cases where the reaction was eczematous. Capecitabine, a fluorouracil pro-drug, has been reported to cause photodistributed lichenoid eruptions [181–184]. Capecitabine may be less photosensitizing than fluorouracil and may be an alternative treatment for patients unable to tolerate fluorouracil-induced photosensitivity [185].

Dacarbazine, also known as imidazole carboxamide, is a chemotherapeutic agent used in the treatment of melanoma and Hodgkin's lymphoma. It acts by methylating guanine nucleotides and disrupting DNA synthesis. Photosensitive eruptions to dacarbazine have been reported and rechallenge evidence exists [186–189]. In one study, participants displaying photosensitivity to dacarbazine, with increased UVA-sensitivity, were switched to temozolomide without reaction. It is suggested that temozolomide may be used as an alternative to dacarbazine in patients who do not tolerate this medication due to photosensitivity [190].

Table 8 Chemotherapeutic medications reported to cause photosensitive drug eruptions

Subclass	Drug	Evidence
Antimetabolites	Fluorouracil	–
	Tegafur	PT [178], PP [179], RC [178, 180]
	Capecitabine	–
	Dacarbazine	PT [189, 190], RC [189]
Antimitotic agents	Taxanes	–
	Doxorubicin	–
	Epirubicin	PP [194]
	Vinblastine	RC [195]
Targeted therapies	Vemurafenib	PT [196]
	Vandetanib	PT [200]
	Erlotinib	–
	Crizotinib	RC [203]
	Imatinib	RC [205, 206]
Miscellaneous agents	Hydroxyurea	–
	Flutamide	PP [210], RC [211]
	Bicalutamide	PT [212]

PP photopatch testing, PT phototesting, RC rechallenge, – indicates test not done or test negative

3.6.2 Antimitotic Agents

The taxanes are a class of antineoplastic agents that disrupt microtubule function and cell division. They are commonly used in the treatment of breast, lung and head and neck carcinomas. Perhaps the best-known member of this class, paclitaxel, has been reported to cause photodistributed erythema multiforme as well as onycholysis [191, 192]. More recently, photosensitive reactions have also been reported for the nanoparticle albumin-bound paclitaxel derivative (nab-paclitaxel) [193]. Other well known agents in this class, including doxorubicin, are also reported to cause photosensitivity reactions. Additionally, photopatch testing was positive in a patient with a bullous eruption secondary to epirubicin [194].

Vinblastine, originally derived from the periwinkle plant, is an anti-mitotic agent used in the treatment of many malignancies, most commonly Hodgkin's lymphoma. Vinblastine has been reported to cause photosensitivity reactions. As well, there is rechallenge evidence for vinblastine phototoxicity in a patient who developed a photodistributed vesicular eruption while on the drug [195]. To our knowledge, vincristine, a chemical analogue of vinblastine, has not been reported to cause photosensitivity reactions.

3.6.3 Targeted Therapies

Vemurafenib, a BRAF inhibitor indicated in the treatment of late stage melanoma, is one of the most common culprits associated with photosensitivity reactions. In a recent review of 520 patients evaluating the cutaneous side effects of this anti-cancer therapy, photosensitivity was reported in 35–63% of patients [7]. Studies have confirmed the photosensitivity of vemurafenib through phototesting with UVA [196]. Importantly, while vemurafenib may induce cutaneous squamous cell carcinomas, these do not appear related to vemurafenib-induced phototoxicity [7].

Vandetanib, a tyrosine kinase inhibitor, has been associated with the development of a photodistributed erythematous, vesiculobullous eruption in patients being treated for thyroid [197], lung [198] and hepatocellular carcinoma [199]. Erythema multiforme-like lesions have also been reported in a single patient treated with vandetanib for thyroid carcinoma [200]. Additionally, several patients have been noted to develop pigmentation in photo-exposed sites (in addition to other locations e.g. scars) while taking this medication [201]. Another tyrosine kinase inhibitor targeting the epidermal growth factor receptor, erlotinib, has also

recently been reported to cause photosensitivity [202]. Crizotinib, a tyrosine kinase inhibitor targeting anaplastic lymphoma kinase, has been confirmed to cause phototoxicity, supported by rechallenge evidence [203].

Imatinib, another drug in this class targeting BCR-ABL, has been reported to cause exaggerated sunburn reactions, photo-induced dermatitis and pseudoporphyria in patients being treated for chronic myelogenous leukemia [204–206]. In one report, the dermatitis was noted to resolve with withdrawal of the medication and recur upon rechallenge [205].

3.6.4 Other Chemotherapeutics

Several other chemotherapeutic agents have been reported to cause photosensitivity reactions. Hydroxyurea has been reported to cause a photodistributed dermatitis in a patient with chronic myeloid leukemia [207] and, in another patient, a photodistributed granulomatous rash was noted [208]. Flutamide and bicalutamide, used in the treatment of prostate cancer, have been reported to cause photosensitivity. With flutamide, there is documented photopatch and rechallenge positivity [209–211] and with bicalutamide, photosensitivity was confirmed by phototesting [212, 213].

3.7 Psychotropic Medications

3.7.1 Antipsychotics

The phenothiazine antipsychotics, chlorpromazine and thioridazine, have both been reported to cause photosensitivity [214–216]. Reported reactions to chlorpromazine include exaggerated sunburn reactions, lichenoid reactions and bullous eruptions [217–219]. Patients taking both thioridazine and chlorpromazine have had positive photopatch responses to these drugs [215, 218, 219]. Long-term, high-dose therapy with either chlorpromazine or thioridazine can result in photodistributed slate-grey to violaceous hyperpigmentation [216]. Flupenthixol, an antipsychotic drug structurally related to the phenothiazines, has also been reported to cause photosensitivity; however, photopatch testing was negative [220]. Haloperidol has been reported to cause a photosensitive dermatitis in one patient [221]. Although the atypical antipsychotics are felt to be less photosensitizing, reactions have been reported. Olanzapine has been reported to cause photo-onycholysis, which was further exacerbated after switching to aripiprazole [222]. Photosensitivity to clozapine [223, 224] and risperidone [225] has been documented.

Table 9 Psychotropic medications reported to cause photosensitive drug eruptions

Subclass	Drug	Evidence
Antipsychotics	Chlorpromazine	PT [217], PP [218, 219]
	Thioridazine	PP [215]
	Flupenthixol	Photoprick testing [220]
	Haloperidol	–
	Olanzapine	–
	Clozapine	–
	Aripiprazole	–
	Risperidone	–
Antidepressants	Imipramine	–
	Clomipramine	PP [229], RC [229]
	Escitalopram	–
	Citalopram	–
	Paroxetine	PT [234], PP [231, 232]
	Fluoxetine	–
	Fluvoxamine	PP [231, 233]
	Sertraline	–
Anxiolytics	Venlafaxine	PT [239]
	Phenelzine	–
	Alprazolam	PT [242], RC [242]
	Chlordiazepoxide	RC [243]

PP photopatch testing, PT phototesting, RC rechallenge, – indicates test not done or test negative

3.7.2 Antidepressants

The tricyclic antidepressants, which are chemically related to the phenothiazines, have been reported to cause photosensitivity. Imipramine caused a photodistributed erythema, as well as a blue-grey hyperpigmentation in photodistributed areas following long-term use [226–228]. Clomipramine has been implicated as a cause of photoallergy, with photopatch and rechallenge testing having been performed [229].

The most commonly prescribed antidepressant medications, the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), have been reported to cause photosensitivity reactions. In their report of erythroderma on sun-exposed sites following artificial tanning while taking escitalopram, Ram-Wolf et al. reviewed all of the reported cases of SSRI photosensitivity in the literature to that point [230]. Since that time, several new reports have emerged implicating even more SSRIs in photosensitivity eruptions. Paroxetine [231, 232] and fluvoxamine [231, 233] have both demonstrated photosensitivity with photopatch positivity. In one patient treated with paroxetine, this manifested as photodistributed granuloma annulare with confirmation via phototesting [234]. Additionally, sertraline has been implicated as the cause of a macular erythematous photoallergic reaction [235]. Fluoxetine has been reported to cause photosensitive reactions, including erythema and

blisters [236, 237], and citalopram has been implicated in photodistributed hyperpigmentation [238]. Venlafaxine, a serotonin-noradrenaline reuptake inhibitor (SNRI), has been reported to cause photodistributed telangiectasia [239]. There are no reports to our knowledge of other SNRI medications, namely duloxetine or desvenlafaxine, causing photosensitivity. The monoamine oxidase inhibitor phenelzine has been reported to cause clinical photosensitivity [240].

3.7.3 Anxiolytics

Alprazolam, a benzodiazepine anxiolytic, has been reported to cause pruritic erythema in sun-exposed sites, with photosensitivity confirmed by rechallenge [237, 241, 242]. Chlordiazepoxide has also been implicated as a cause of a photo-induced eczematous eruption [243].

3.8 Miscellaneous Medications

3.8.1 Hormone Contraceptives

Several case reports have documented photosensitive eruptions following the use of combined oral contraceptives containing either ethinylestradiol and levonorgestrel [244] or ethinylestradiol and desogestrel, with recurrence of this eruption on rechallenge with a second pill containing ethinylestradiol and levonorgestrel [245]. Similar reactions have also been reported with the use of a contraceptive patch containing norelgestromin and ethinylestradiol, with recurrence of the erythematous, vesicular eruption when the patient was switched to an oral contraceptive pill containing ethinylestradiol and drospirenone. The report concluded that ethinylestradiol was most likely the offending agent. Rechallenge testing with the oral contraceptive pill was positive [246].

3.8.2 Systemic Retinoids

Systemic retinoids are often implicated as a cause of photosensitivity. However, evidence supporting this claim is lacking. Ferguson and Johnson addressed this question through a literature review and experimental testing with both etretinate and isotretinoin [247, 248]. Clinical and experimental evidence supporting etretinate-induced photosensitivity was demonstrated, but no clinical or experimental evidence was found to suggest isotretinoin-induced photosensitivity. Another study reported similar results for isotretinoin [249]. Etretinate-induced photosensitivity typically manifests as increased susceptibility to sunburn, although pseudoporphyria [250] and photoleukoderma [251] have also been reported. To our knowledge, there have been no

Table 10 Miscellaneous medications reported to cause photosensitivity drug eruptions

Class	Drug	Evidence
Retinoids	Etretinate	PT [247, 248], PP [251], RC [251]
	Isotretinoin	–
Contraceptive hormones	Ethinylestradiol	RC [245, 246]
Antihistamines	Ranitidine	RC [256, 257]
	Diphenhydramine	PP [252, 253]
	Mequitazine	PP [254]
	Repirinast	PT [255], RC [255]
	Carbamazepine	PP [262, 263], RC [263]
Oral hypoglycemic agents	Glibenclamide (glyburide)	PT [260]
	Sitagliptin	–
	Metformin	RC [258]
Antiplatelet agents	Clopidogrel	RC [265]
	Triflusal	PT [266]
Proton pump inhibitors	Pantoprazole	–
	Esomeprazole	–
Monoclonal antibody	Eculizumab	–
	Tocilizumab	–
Anti-inflammatory	Leflunomide	–
	Mesalazine	–
Others	Pirfenidone	–
	2-Mercaptoethane sulfonate sodium (Mesna)	–

PP photopatch testing, PT phototesting, RC rechallenge, – indicates test not done or test negative

recent reports documenting a confirmed case of isotretinoin-induced photosensitivity.

3.8.3 Antihistamines

Diphenhydramine, one of the most commonly used antihistamines, has been reported to cause photosensitivity, confirmed through photopatch testing [252, 253]. The phenothiazine antihistamine mequitazine has been demonstrated to be photosensitizing, with positive photopatch results [254]. Repirinast has been reported to cause solar urticaria [255]. Ranitidine, an antihistamine used to treat gastroesophageal reflux disease, has been reported to cause a papulosquamous eruption on sun-exposed sites confirmed by rechallenge [256]. A second case report of ranitidine-induced photosensitivity was confirmed through normalization of the patient's phototest results on discontinuation of the medication [257].

3.8.4 Diabetes Medications

Metformin, a medication commonly used in the management of diabetes mellitus as well as other conditions, has been linked to the development of both erythematous and eczematous photosensitivity eruptions in three patients, one of which was confirmed with positive rechallenge evidence

[258]. Glibenclamide (glyburide), a sulfonylurea oral hypoglycaemic agent, has been reported to cause an eczematous photodermatitis [259, 260]. While phototesting has revealed increased sensitivity to UVA and UVB with glibenclamide, photopatch testing has been negative and rechallenge testing has not been performed [260]. Sitagliptin, a dipeptidyl peptidase-4 inhibitor, has also been reported to cause a prolonged photosensitive eruption in a single patient [261].

3.8.5 Others

Carbamazepine has been reported to cause both photosensitive eczematous and lichenoid eruptions, with photopatch and rechallenge evidence [262, 263]. An unusual reaction was reported where carbamazepine-induced facial burns occurred in one patient secondary to prolonged use of a photocopier [264]. Clopidogrel, an antiplatelet agent, has been reported to cause a lichenoid photodistributed eruption, confirmed by rechallenge [265]. The platelet aggregation inhibitor, triflusal, has also been reported to cause an extensive, eczematous photodistributed eruption in a single patient [266]. Pirfenidone, a medication used in the treatment of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, has recently been implicated in photosensitivity reactions ranging from exfoliative erythema [267] to photoleukomelanoderma [268].

Although not typically considered to be photosensitizing, case reports of proton pump inhibitor-induced photosensitivity have been published for both pantoprazole [269] and esomeprazole [270]. Importantly, in the case of esomeprazole-induced photosensitive dermatitis, the reactions resolved on discontinuation of the drug and did not recur when the patient was initiated on ranitidine, suggesting little potential for cross-reactivity between these different classes of medications.

Eculizumab, leflunomide, mesalazine, tocilizumab and 2-mercaptoethane sulfonate sodium (Mesna) have all been reported to cause photosensitivity, but none, to the best of our knowledge, have been evaluated by phototesting or photopatch testing [271–275].

4 Prevention and Management

Physicians should be aware of the photosensitizing potential of the medications they prescribe, particularly for those with well documented evidence (e.g. tetracycline antibiotics, amiodarone), and should counsel patients about sun avoidance and sun protection when initiating treatment with a known photosensitizing medication. The tables provided in this document provide a framework for understanding which medications have been reported to cause photosensitivity; however, not all of these have high quality evidence to support their photosensitizing potential, and photosensitivity from most of the listed medications is not common. Medications that are considered potent photosensitizers are listed in Table 2, and these warrant physician and patient awareness prior to their prescription.

Should a patient present with a new rash when taking a potentially photosensitizing medication, the physician's first goal should be to obtain a thorough history, particularly focusing on the chronology of medication in relation to the onset of the cutaneous eruption. Along with the history, physical examination will help to determine if the rash is photo-induced. Physical examination generally reveals a photodistributed pattern to the eruption with sparing of photo-protected sites (e.g. upper eyelids, bases of folds including the nasolabial folds, and the submental and posterior auricular regions). Of note, one must be cautious about distinguishing true photosensitivity from photorecall reactions, a reaction that is most commonly associated with chemotherapeutic agents. In a photorecall reaction, drug administration even in the absence of sunlight triggers a sunburn-like reaction in the same distribution of a prior sunburn the patient acquired months to years earlier. This photorecall reaction has been most commonly reported with methotrexate but has also been described with gemcitabine and the taxanes [276–281].

If a drug-induced photosensitive eruption is suspected, diagnostic tests, including phototesting, photopatch testing and clinical rechallenge (with possible repeating phototesting) may be carried out to help clarify the diagnosis and the culprit medication. While these tests are not always available or necessary, phototesting may be useful in assessing for other causes of photosensitivity where the situation is clinically unclear. Repeat phototesting several months after discontinuation of the suspected drug can also help clarify that the cause of photosensitivity is a drug reaction. Once a diagnosis of a drug-induced photosensitivity disorder is made and the offending drug is identified, the most important aspect of management is discontinuation of the drug [282]. While persistent photosensitivity may occur, the photosensitivity usually abates shortly after the photosensitizing medication is discontinued. In some cases, photosensitivity persists for several months despite discontinuation of the medication. As such, it is recommended that repeat phototesting only occur 3–6 months following discontinuation of the offending agent.

Discontinuation of the photosensitizing medication may not be possible for all patients. When this is the case, secondary prevention measures such as sun avoidance, especially during peak daylight hours, and the use of sun protective clothing and sunscreens with both UVA and UVB protection should be implemented. Other strategies that have been reported include administering medications in the evening [283], although the effectiveness of this strategy would be highly dependent on the pharmacokinetic properties of the medication. Alternatively, 'hardening' with gradually increasing doses of narrowband UVB phototherapy has been reported as a viable strategy to increase tolerance to sun exposure for a patient with amiodarone-induced photosensitivity [284].

For patients who are symptomatic, the use of topical or systemic corticosteroids may be helpful to treat drug-induced photosensitive eruptions. This is helpful to hasten resolution of the photo-induced eruption as the culprit medication is being discontinued. Topical corticosteroids can also be used when a photosensitizing agent cannot be discontinued. Early treatment of the eruption is advisable as one study regarding sparfloxacin photosensitivity found that delayed treatment of photosensitive eruptions may make them more difficult to treat [285].

5 Conclusion

The exact incidence of drug-induced photosensitivity is unknown, but for some medications it is quite common. The diagnosis of photo-induced drug eruptions is largely clinical but can be assisted by diagnostic tests such as phototesting, photopatch testing and rechallenge testing. A large number of medications have been implicated in the literature as causes

of photosensitivity, many with convincing clinical and scientific support. This comprehensive narrative review has been assembled to help direct both the physician and patient as to common culprits of drug-induced photosensitivity reactions. This review helps to build on a growing compendium of information on this topic, but also provides the added benefit of detailed discussion regarding the reported clinical manifestations for each reported reaction as well as a dissection of the explicit clinical testing completed to confirm each culprit medication. This resource will help to guide physicians starting potentially photosensitizing medications, as well as those faced with evaluating potential drug-induced rashes. It is important for clinicians to recognize these eruptions, regardless of the causative agent, and treat them accordingly. For medications that are known to be potent photosensitizers, patient education regarding this potential side effect prior to initiation of therapy is imperative.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest Kim M. Blakely, Aaron M. Drucker and Cheryl F. Rosen have no conflicts of interest that are directly related to the content of this study. Outside of this work, Aaron M. Drucker has served as an investigator and has received research funding from Sanofi and Regeneron and has been a consultant for Sanofi, RTI Health Solutions, Eczema Society of Canada and Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technology in Health. He has received honoraria from Prime Inc, Spire Learning, CME Outfitters and Eczema Society of Canada. His institution has received educational grants from Sanofi. Outside of this work, Cheryl F. Rosen has served as a consultant for AbbVie Corporation, Janssen Inc. and Novartis Pharmaceuticals. She also receives research support from AbbVie and Janssen. Her institution has received educational grants from Bausch, Celgene, AbbVie and Janssen.

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