Behcet's Disease

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Source

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). Behcet's Disease Information Page.

Behcet's disease is a rare, chronic inflammatory disorder. The cause of Behcet's disease is unknown, but current research suggests that both genetic and environmental factors play a role. Behcet's disease generally begins when individuals are in their 20s or 30s, although it can happen at any age. It tends to occur more often in men than in women. Symptoms of Behcet's disease include recurrent ulcers in the mouth (resembling canker sores) and on the genitals, and eye inflammation. The disorder may also cause various types of skin lesions, arthritis, bowel inflammation, meningitis (inflammation of the membranes of the brain and spinal cord), and cranial nerve palsies. Behcet's is a multi-system disease; it may involve all organs and affect the central nervous system, causing memory loss and impaired speech, balance, and movement.

The effects of the disease may include blindness, stroke, swelling of the spinal cord, and intestinal complications. The disease is common in the Middle East, particularly in Turkey, and in Far Eastern nations such as Japan and Korean, but is less common in the United States.