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# SIDE EFFECTS OF SYSTEMIC ANTIMYCOTIC TREATMENT

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## SUMMARY

Fungal infections are common in humans and their prevalence is still growing. Most mycotic infections of skin, mucosae and their appendages are very appropriate for topical treatment, but for certain clinical manifestations (onychomycosis, tinea capitis, chronically recidivating vaginal infections and extensive or very resistant glabrous skin infections, especially in immunocompromized patients) systemic antimycotic therapy seems to be the reasonable choice. The mechanisms of action of oral antifungals that are currently most often prescribed in Slovenia and their most common side effects are discussed: adverse events, asymptomatic elevations of liver function tests, symptomatic liver injury, side effects connected with cytochrome P450 and drug interactions. Finally we describe the recommendations about oral antimycotics during pregnancy and lactation and their possible interference with the activity of oral contraceptives.

## KEY WORDS

*systemic antimycotics, griseofulvin, itraconazole, fluconazole, terbinafine, adverse events, asymptomatic and symptomatic hepatic injury, cytochrome P450 enzymes, drug interactions.*

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## INTRODUCTION

On the phylogenetical tree there exists a strong branch of fungi, consisting of more than 100 000 species of dermatophytes, yeasts and moulds (1). Fungi are eukaryotes - they have a true nucleus with a nuclear membrane, cytoplasmatic membrane, and a special cell wall containing chitin.

Fungal infections are common in humans and their prevalence is even growing. Aging of the population and expansion of the immunocompromised

population - either because of the underlying illness or caused iatrogenetically - are factors that contribute most to it. Certainly fungal infections of skin, mucosae and their appendages are appropriate for topical treatment, but in some situations systemic antimycotic therapy has advantages. Fungal infections of deep skin layers are often difficult to reach by local antimycotics in efficient concentrations. Topical agents can not - with few exceptions - penetrate hair or

