

- Systemic lupus erythematosus has a complex pathogenesis and the course of events leading to this disease are not well understood.
- Exposure to certain environmental factors may impair the equilibrium between self and foreign as well as between tolerance and immune response, leading to autoimmune diseases, cancer and the so-called “lifestyle diseases”.
- These external stimuli may also alter the epigenetic status quo and may trigger lupus in genetically-susceptible individuals.
- Deciphering the contribution of epigenetic alterations to the pathogenesis of lupus will provide insights in this complex autoimmune disease.
- Epigenetic alterations are (potentially) reversible and hence promising candidates for the development of new therapeutics.

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