

More than two thirds of patients are aged 30-60 years; however, lichen planus can occur at any age ⁽⁴⁾. Many clinical variants of the disease are present (according to the morphology or the areas of involvement) ^(1,2). Psoriasis is a common, chronic, relapsing, inflammatory skin disorder with a strong genetic basis. Plaque type of psoriasis is the most common, although several other distinctive clinical variants of psoriasis are recognized (Guttate Psoriasis; Pustular Psoriasis; Psoriatic Arthritis; flexural Psoriasis; Erythrodermic Psoriasis ... etc) ^(5,6). Plaque psoriasis is most typically characterized by circular-to-oval red plaques distributed over the extensor body surfaces and the scalp. The plaques usually exhibit scaling as a result of epidermal hyperproliferation and dermal inflammation. The extent and duration of plaque psoriasis is highly variable from patient to patient. Acute flares or relapses of plaque psoriasis may also evolve into more severe disease, such as pustular or erythrodermic psoriasis ^(1,7). Psoriasis affects adult males and females equally. Plaque psoriasis first appears during two peak age ranges. The first peak occurs in persons aged 16-22 years, and the second occurs in persons above 50 years ⁽⁸⁾.

Selenium (Se) is one of the trace elements, which include in addition, iron, copper, iodine, chromium and zinc. All of them are required for physiological functions in amounts less than 100 mg daily ⁽⁹⁾. Normal serum concentration of selenium is 80-130 µg/l ⁽¹⁰⁾; the concentration of selenium in blood is highly responsive to changes in the selenium level in the diet over a wide range ⁽¹⁰⁾. Supplemental selenium has restored cell proliferation defects associated with aging mice by increasing the number of high affinity IL-2 receptors and improved T-cell response to phytohaemoagglutination and significant progressive increase in delayed

type hypersensitivity in hemodialysis patients ⁽¹¹⁾. Selenium is a component of the enzyme glutathione peroxidase, and is important, together with vitamin E, in protection against damage by peroxides and free radicals (it is important for the integrity of the immune system in human body). Selenium acts as anti toxic element, can binds cadmium, mercury and other metals, it mitigates their toxic effect, and even the toxic level in tissues remain unchanged. On the other hand selenium may be toxic when ingested water containing a high amounts of the metal ^(12,13). Some studies indicate that selenium can be useful in the treatment of acne and it also helps in treatment and prevention of dandruff and some other skin disorders ⁽¹⁴⁾. Many studies showed the relation between selenium level and psoriasis, but no known study was done to show the relation between selenium level and lichen planus and so this study was performed to measure selenium level in Iraqi patients with lichen planus and in patients with psoriasis and its relation to the chronicity and the severity of both diseases.

Methods

One hundred twenty patients were included in this study, 68 (56.7%) of them were males and 52 (43.3%) were females, with ages between 18-54 years and a mean age of 35.7±10.8 years. The study was conducted from July 2007 till the end of December 2009 in the Department of Dermatology of Al-Kadhymia Teaching Hospital in Baghdad.

Three groups were present in this study and each one contained 40 patients, the first one included patients with lichen planus, the second included patients with psoriasis and the third was a control group. The diagnosis of both diseases was done depending on the clinical bases. Full history was obtained from each patient including age, occupation,