

## Keywords

Oral lichen planus; photobiomodulation; platelet-rich plasma; precision medicine; Janus kinase inhibitors.

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# Therapeutic Advances in Oral Lichen Planus: A Scoping Review of Emerging and Precision-Based Treatment Strategies

## Abstract

**Background:** Oral lichen planus (OLP) is an inflammatory condition caused by the immune system that affects quality of life and has the potential for malignant transformation. Topical corticosteroids are the first-line treatment; however, recurrence and side effects have limited their long-term efficacy, leading to an increased demand for targeted and regenerative therapies.

**Objective:** The aim of this review is to outline the currently available evidence on both conventional and novel strategies for OLP management and to review their clinical outcomes.

**Methods:** This scoping review was conducted according to the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) methodology and the PRISMA-ScR guidelines. PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science were searched for eligible studies evaluating OLP therapies. Data were categorized according to treatment modality and narratively synthesized.

**Results:** A total of 35 studies comprising different therapeutic modalities were included. These studies demonstrated significant improvements in pain, lesion management, mucosal healing, and patient-reported outcomes. However, direct comparisons were hindered by significant variations in trial design, treatment protocols, outcome measures, and follow-up duration.

**Conclusion:** Precision-based and regenerative therapies are becoming increasingly prevalent in the management of OLP. However, long-term follow-up studies and additional clinical trials are needed to determine their effectiveness and safety.

Received-05-06-2026

Revised-17-07-2026

Accepted-25-07-20.26

Doi:10.1922/ejprd.v34i7s.1608

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Oral lichen planus (OLP) is a long lasting, immune mediated inflammatory disease of muco-cutaneous origin. The estimated global prevalence is around 0.5% to 2%.<sup>[1]</sup> Mostly, it is prevalent in middle aged ,older adults and more common in women. Clinically, OLP can appear as reticular, papular, plaque like, atrophic, erosive or even bullous lesions and it involves buccal mucosa, tongue, gingiva and the labial mucosa.<sup>[1,2]</sup> The reticular type has not much symptoms, but the erosive and atrophic forms, has a burning feeling and more chances of turning into malignancy.<sup>[1,2]</sup> World Health Organization listed OLP as an oral potentially malignant disorder, so it demands a careful long term follow up and therapeutic action.<sup>[1,2]</sup>

The management of OLP focus on relieving symptoms, mucosal inflammation and help lesions in healing, and overall well being while keeping treatment related side effects. Topical corticosteroids is the first-line approach since their anti-inflammatory effect is well proven and in most patients there is a good clinical response.<sup>[2,3]</sup> The recurrence after stopping therapy develops steroid resistance, incomplete remission and adverse events like oral candidiasis and mucosal atrophy.<sup>[2][3]</sup> Because of this, more and more focus is towards finding safer, yet also more effective alternatives, which can deliver more long lasting disease control.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

Over the past decade, there has been a progress towards the development of new therapeutic approaches for OLP. Besides the usual pharmacological agents, more and more focus is being on photobiomodulation therapy, photodynamic therapy, platelet rich plasma, injectable platelet rich fibrin, probiotics, herbal and antioxidants, and nanotechnology based drug delivery systems, as well as targeted immunomodulatory therapies, including Janus kinase inhibitors.<sup>[3]</sup> A number of these interventions have shown promising clinical results, in the decreasing pain, lesion resolution improves and tissue regeneration seems more robust.<sup>[3]</sup> Overall ,these advances suggest a slow but steady shift away from purely symptom driven care, towards regenerative and precision based options, designed around the actual biological mechanisms driving the disease.<sup>[3]</sup>

Therefore, the present scoping review was undertaken to comprehensively map the current evidence on conventional, emerging, regenerative, and precision-based therapeutic interventions for oral lichen planus. In addition to summarizing the reported clinical outcomes associated with these therapies, this review aims to identify research trends, evaluate existing evidence gaps, and provide directions for future clinical research and evidence-based management of OLP.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1 Study Design

This scoping review was conducted in accordance with the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) methodology for scoping reviews and is reported following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-

Though the exact etiology of OLP is still unknown, people generally think its pathogenesis is multifactorial with a kind of interplaying between genetic vulnerability, environmental triggers, epithelial barrier dysfunction and then dysregulated immune responses too. The mechanism of OLP is cell mediated immunity with activated CD8<sup>+</sup> cytotoxic T lymphocytes driving apoptosis of basal keratinocytes via inflammatory cytokines, multiple intracellular signalling pathways that get switched on.<sup>[2]</sup> More recent evidence emphasizes that oxidative stress along with cytokine networks, and Janus kinase signals act as transducer and activator of JAK/STAT pathway.<sup>[3]</sup> Alterations in the oral microbiome involved both initiation and persistence of the disease.<sup>[2]</sup>

Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines. The review protocol was prospectively registered on the Open Science Framework (OSF) with the registration ID 7mkgv.

The review question was developed using the Population–Concept–Context (PCC) framework recommended by the JBI.

### 2.2 Eligibility Criteria

Studies published in English between January 2015 and December 2025 that evaluated conventional, emerging, regenerative, or precision-based therapies for oral lichen planus (OLP) in human participants were eligible for inclusion. Randomized controlled trials, non-randomized clinical trials, cohort studies, case-control studies, cross-sectional studies, case series, case reports and protocols were considered. Studies involving in vitro or animal experiments, conference abstracts, editorials, letters to the editor, expert opinions, narrative reviews and articles not published in English were excluded.

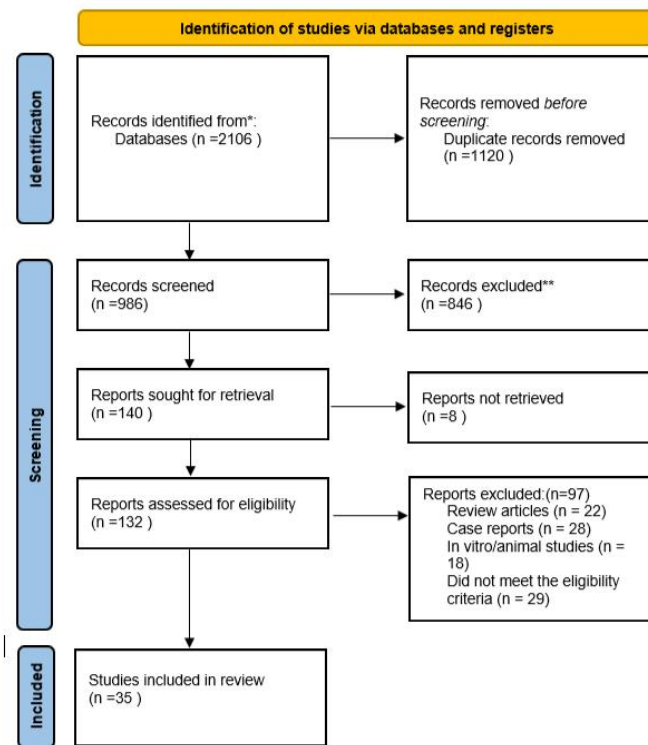
A comprehensive literature search was conducted through three electronic databases PubMed, Scopus and Web of Science. The search strategy combined Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and free-text keywords related to oral lichen planus and therapeutic interventions.

### 2.3 Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature search was conducted using three electronic databases: **PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science**. The search strategy was developed using a combination of Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and free-text keywords related to oral lichen planus and its therapeutic interventions. Boolean operators (**AND** and **OR**) were used to combine the search terms appropriately. The complete search strategy for each database is presented in **Table 1**. All retrieved records were imported into **Rayyan** software for duplicate removal. Two reviewers independently screened the titles and abstracts according to the predefined eligibility criteria. Studies that met the eligibility criteria underwent full-text assessment. Any disagreements between the reviewers were resolved through discussion. If consensus could not be reached, a third reviewer was consulted.

TABLE-1- SEARCH STATERGY

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |     |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| PUBMED         | <p>( "Lichen Planus, Oral"[Mesh]<br/> OR "oral lichen planus"[tiab]<br/> OR "lichen planus, oral"[tiab]<br/> OR "erosive oral lichen planus"[tiab]<br/> OR "atrophic oral lichen planus"[tiab]<br/> OR OLP[tiab])<br/> AND( treatment[tiab] OR therapy[tiab] OR management[tiab] OR intervention*[tiab]OR<br/> novel[tiab] OR new[tiab] OR emerging[tiab] OR advanced[tiab] OR recent[tiab]OR "JAK<br/> inhibitor*" [tiab] OR tofacitinib[tiab] OR baricitinib[tiab] OR ruxolitinib[tiab] OR<br/> upadacitinib[tiab]OR biologic*[tiab] OR "monoclonal antibody"[tiab]<br/> OR "photodynamic therapy"[tiab] OR PDT[tiab]<br/> OR "low level laser therapy"[tiab] OR LLLT[tiab]OR photobiomodulation [tiab] OR<br/> "platelet rich plasma"[tiab] OR PRP[tiab] OR "platelet rich fibrin"[tiab] OR PRF[tiab]<br/> OR tacrolimus[tiab] OR pimecrolimus[tiab] OR "calcineurin inhibitor*" [tiab] OR<br/> curcumin[tiab] OR "aloe vera"[tiab]<br/> OR liposomal[tiab] OR nano*[tiab] OR "drug delivery"[tiab]<br/> )AND("systematic review"[pt]OR "meta-analysis"[pt]<br/> OR "systematic review"[tiab]OR "meta analysis"[tiab]OR randomized controlled<br/> trial[pt]OR clinical trial[pt]OR trial[tiab]OR cohort[tiab]OR observational[tiab] OR "cross-<br/> sectional"[tiab]OR "case series"[tiab] OR "case report"[tiab]OR pilot[tiab])NOT<br/> (animals[mh] NOT humans[mh])</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 628 |
| SCOPUS         | <p>( INDEXTERMS ( "Lichen Planus, Oral" ) OR TITLE-ABS ( "oral lichen planus" ) OR<br/> TITLE-ABS ( "lichen planus, oral" ) OR TITLE-ABS ( "erosive oral lichen planus" ) OR<br/> TITLE-ABS ( "atrophic oral lichen planus" ) OR TITLE-ABS ( OLP ) ) AND ( TITLE-ABS<br/> ( treatment ) OR TITLE-ABS ( therapy ) OR TITLE-ABS ( management ) OR TITLE-ABS<br/> ( intervention* ) OR TITLE-ABS ( novel ) OR TITLE-ABS ( new ) OR TITLE-ABS<br/> ( emerging ) OR TITLE-ABS ( advanced ) OR TITLE-ABS ( "recent" ) OR TITLE-ABS<br/> ( "JAK inhibitor*" ) OR TITLE-ABS ( tofacitinib ) OR TITLE-ABS ( baricitinib ) OR<br/> TITLE-ABS ( ruxolitinib ) OR TITLE-ABS ( upadacitinib ) OR TITLE-ABS ( biologic* )<br/> OR TITLE-ABS ( "monoclonal antibody" ) OR TITLE-ABS ( "photodynamic therapy" ) OR<br/> TITLE-ABS ( PDT ) OR TITLE-ABS ( "low level laser therapy" ) OR TITLE-ABS ( LLLT )<br/> OR TITLE-ABS ( photobiomodulation ) OR TITLE-ABS ( "platelet rich plasma" ) OR<br/> TITLE-ABS ( PRP ) OR TITLE-ABS ( "platelet rich fibrin" ) OR TITLE-ABS ( PRF ) OR<br/> TITLE-ABS ( tacrolimus ) OR TITLE-ABS ( pimecrolimus ) OR TITLE-ABS ( "calcineurin<br/> inhibitor*" ) OR TITLE-ABS ( curcumin ) OR TITLE-ABS ( "aloe vera" ) OR TITLE-ABS<br/> ( liposomal ) OR TITLE-ABS ( nano* ) OR TITLE-ABS ( "drug delivery" ) ) AND<br/> ( DOCTYPE ( "systematic review" ) OR DOCTYPE ( meta-analysis ) OR TITLE-ABS<br/> ( "systematic review" ) OR TITLE-ABS ( "meta analysis" ) OR DOCTYPE ( "randomized<br/> controlled trial" ) OR DOCTYPE ( "clinical trial" ) OR TITLE-ABS ( trial ) OR TITLE-ABS<br/> ( cohort ) OR TITLE-ABS ( observational ) OR TITLE-ABS ( cross-sectional ) OR TITLE-<br/> ABS ( "case series" ) OR TITLE-ABS ( "case report" ) OR TITLE-ABS ( pilot ) )</p> | 712 |
| WEB OF SCIENCE | <p>("Lichen Planus, Oral" OR "oral lichen planus"OR "lichen planus, oral"<br/> OR "erosive oral lichen planus" OR "atrophic oral lichen planus"<br/> OR OLP)AND(treatment OR therapy OR management OR intervention*<br/> OR novel OR new OR emerging OR advanced OR recent<br/> OR "JAK inhibitor*" OR tofacitinib OR baricitinib OR ruxolitinib OR upadacitinib OR<br/> biologic* OR "monoclonal antibody"OR "photodynamic therapy" OR PDTOR "low level<br/> laser therapy" OR LLLT OR photobiomodulationOR "platelet rich plasma" OR PRP OR<br/> "platelet rich fibrin" OR PRFOR tacrolimus OR pimecrolimus OR "calcineurin inhibitor*"OR<br/> curcumin OR "aloe vera" OR liposomal OR nano* OR "drug delivery")AND("systematic<br/> review" OR meta-analysis OR "systematic review"OR "meta analysis"OR "randomized<br/> controlled trial" OR "clinical trial"OR trial OR cohort OR observational OR cross-sectional<br/> OR "case series"OR "case report"OR pilot)NOT (animals NOT humans)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 766 |



[FIGURE-1]-PRISMA 2020 FLOW DIAGRAM

### 2.3 Data Extraction

The literature search identified 2,106 records from PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science. After removing 1,120 duplicate records, 986 records remained for title and abstract screening. Following screening, 846 records were excluded, and 140 reports were sought for retrieval. Of these, 8 reports could not be retrieved, leaving 132 full-text articles for eligibility assessment. A total of 97 articles were excluded after full-text review, including 22 review articles, 28 case reports, 18 in vitro or animal studies and 29 studies that did not meet the predefined eligibility criteria. Finally, 35 studies were included in the scoping review (Figure 1). The interventions were categorized as:

- Pharmacological therapies
- Laser and light-based therapies
- Regenerative therapies
- Natural and herbal therapies
- Targeted immunomodulatory therapies

The findings were summarized narratively to identify research trends, evidence gaps, and future research priorities.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Characteristics of Included Studies

The review included 35 studies published between 2015 and December 2025, comprising 22 randomized controlled trials (62.9%) and 13 observational studies, cohort studies, case series, and case reports (37.1%). Most of the studies focused on short term outcomes, with follow up periods from 4 weeks to 6 months, though only few studies, assessing long term clinical outcomes beyond one year. The included studies a broad mix of therapeutic interventions, really showing the increasing variety of treatment options that are available for OLP. [TABLE-3A,3B]

### 3.2 Distribution of Therapeutic Interventions

The therapeutic approaches identified in the included studies were classified into five major categories according to their mechanism of action.

- Pharmacological therapies: 13 studies (37.1%)
- Laser- and light-based therapies: 9 studies (25.7%)
- Natural and herbal therapies: 7 studies (20.0%)
- Regenerative therapies: 4 studies (11.4%)
- Targeted immunomodulatory therapies: 2 studies (5.7%)

Pharmacological therapies has the largest proportion of the evidence, whereas targeted immunomodulatory therapies represented the smallest but most rapidly emerging research area.

TABLE 3A. DATA FROM RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIALS (RCTS)

| S.No. | Author                  | Sample Size | Intervention (with concentration/dose)                      | Comparator                  | Follow-up | Outcomes                                | Adverse Effects |
|-------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1     | Ferri EP et al.[3]      | 44          | Photobiomodulation (PBM) using diode laser (study protocol) | Clobetasol propionate 0.05% | 60 days   | Pain reduction and clinical improvement | None            |
| 2     | Yasmine Kamal et al.[4] | 60          | Probiotic supplementation + Clobetasol propionate 0.05%     | Clobetasol propionate 0.05% | 4 weeks   | Improved symptom relief                 | None            |

|    |                                 |    |                                                           |                                                    |          |                                 |                         |
|----|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3  | Zahra Delavarian et al.[5]      | 28 | Vitamin D supplementation (50,000 IU/week)                | Routine topical therapy (Dexamethasone + Nystatin) | 8 weeks  | Reduced TNF- $\alpha$ and pain  | None                    |
| 4  | Alaa Aboushousha et al.[6]      | 42 | Systemic zinc + Vitamin D supplementation                 | Topical corticosteroid                             | 8 weeks  | Better pain reduction with zinc | None                    |
| 5  | Maryam Amirchaghmaghi et al.[7] | 20 | Curcumin mouthwash (study concentration)                  | Dexamethasone 0.5 mg + Nystatin                    | 4 weeks  | Reduced lesion severity         | None                    |
| 6  | Seyed Javad Kia et al.[8]       | 57 | Oral Nano-curcumin 80 mg/day                              | Prednisolone 10 mg/day                             | 1 month  | Comparable efficacy             | None                    |
| 7  | Alessandro Polizzi et al.[9]    | 47 | Topical Fluocinonide 0.05%                                | Placebo                                            | 6 months | Improved lesions and symptoms   | None                    |
| 8  | Suzan Ibrahim et al.[10]        | 30 | Tacrolimus 0.1% mucoadhesive patch                        | Tacrolimus 0.1% gel / Triamcinolone 0.1% gel       | 8 weeks  | Faster lesion regression        | Burning sensation       |
| 9  | Qingxiang Zeng et al.[11]       | 57 | Low-concentration Betamethasone mouthwash                 | Dexamethasone mouthwash                            | 3 months | Better erosion healing          | None                    |
| 10 | Kalagi Panchal et al.[12]       | 60 | Low-Level Laser Therapy + topical steroids                | Topical steroids                                   | 90 days  | Improved remission              | None                    |
| 11 | Reem Kamal Mohamed et al.[13]   | 40 | Photobiomodulation using 980-nm diode laser               | Triamcinolone acetonide 0.1%                       | 12 weeks | Comparable efficacy             | None                    |
| 12 | Shivakumar Sivaraman et al.[14] | 30 | Triamcinolone 0.1%, Clobetasol 0.05%, Tacrolimus 0.03%    | Comparative groups                                 | 3 months | Clobetasol most effective       | None                    |
| 13 | Maria Georgaki et al.[15]       | 32 | Dexamethasone oral solution (2 mg/5 mL)                   | Cyclosporine oral solution 100 mg/mL               | 6 months | Better early response           | None                    |
| 14 | Jacek Zborowski et al.[16]      | 30 | Photodynamic Therapy (PDT)                                | Triamcinolone                                      | 12 weeks | Comparable remission            | Transient pain/swelling |
| 15 | Ahmed Fathy Samhan et al.[17]   | 46 | Honey + Photobiomodulation                                | Placebo                                            | 4 weeks  | Better lesion remission         | None                    |
| 16 | Aniket U. Vaidya et al.[18]     | 60 | Aloe vera gel + Aloe vera juice                           | Clobetasol propionate 0.05%                        | 6 months | Pain and lesion improvement     | None                    |
| 17 | Qi et al.[19]                   | 60 | Nd:YAG (1064 nm) laser + Total Glucosides of Paeony (TGP) | TGP alone                                          | 3 months | Superior pain reduction         | None                    |
| 18 | Sulewska et al.[20]             | 90 | 5% ALA-PDT 5-Aminolevulinic acid Photodynamic Therapy     | Clobetasol                                         | 6 months | Sustained healing               | Transient discomfort    |
| 19 | Shimaa Kotb et al.[21]          | 30 | Topical Curcumin 1% + Triamcinolone acetonide 0.1%        | Triamcinolone acetonide 0.1%                       | 3 months | Greatest clinical improvement   | Mild candidiasis        |
| 20 | Federica Veneri et al.[22]      | 51 | Ozonized water + topical steroid                          | Placebo water + topical steroid                    | 3 months | Superior lesion reduction       | None                    |
| 21 | Mai Zakaria et al.[23]          | 46 | Topical Sulfasalazine + corticosteroid                    | Corticosteroid                                     | 4 weeks  | Faster lesion regression        | None                    |
| 22 | Diana Mostafaa et al.[24]       | 20 | Photodynamic Therapy (PDT)                                | Topical corticosteroid                             | 2 months | Greater pain relief             | Mild local reactions    |

**TABLE 3B. DATA FROM OBSERVATIONAL STUDIES, CASE SERIES, AND CASE REPORTS**

| S. N o. | Study                              | Sam ple Size | Intervention (Concentration/Dose/D etails)                                                                                                                 | Comparator                             | Follow-up    | Outcomes                              | Adverse Effects             |
|---------|------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1       | Myers et al.[25]                   | 18           | Mycophenolate mofetil (dose not reported)                                                                                                                  | Methotrexate/Hydro xychloroquine (HCQ) | Not reported | 88.9% clinical improvemen t           | Gastrointe stinal symptoms  |
| 2       | Tarun Kumar et al.[26]             | 50           | Topical ozonized olive oil (concentration not reported)                                                                                                    | None                                   | 6 months     | Rapid healing and symptom relief      | None                        |
| 3       | Noot CH et al.[27]                 | 10           | Upadacitinib (dose not reported)                                                                                                                           | None                                   | 610 days     | Clinical improvemen t in all patients | None                        |
| 4       | Nahid Derikvand et al.[28]         | 1            | 980-nm diode laser                                                                                                                                         | None                                   | 1 month      | Successful lesion healing             | None                        |
| 5       | Elisabetta Merigo et al.[29]       | 1            | Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) oral rinses                                                                                                                     | None                                   | 1 month      | Complete ulcer healing                | None                        |
| 6       | Magdalena Ewa Sulewska et al.[30]  | 20           | 5-Aminolevulinic acid-mediated photodynamic therapy (5-ALA PDT) (concentration not reported)                                                               | None                                   | 12 months    | Reduced lesion size                   | Transient burning sensation |
| 7       | Nik M.M. Nik Mohd Rosdy et al.[31] | 1            | Holistic management (dietary modification, stress reduction, oral hygiene modification, xerostomia management, and topical betamethasone 0.1% as required) | None                                   | 10 years     | Long-term disease control             | None                        |
| 8       | Pooria Fallah Abed et al.[32]      | 18           | Free soft tissue autograft                                                                                                                                 | None                                   | 1 year       | Low recurrence rate                   | None                        |
| 9       | Antonello Mameli et al.[33]        | 1            | Very low-level laser therapy (660-nm diode laser)                                                                                                          | None                                   | 4 months     | Rapid lesion healing                  | None                        |
| 10      | Subash Chandra Raj et al.[34]      | 45           | Hydroxychloroquine (dose not reported)                                                                                                                     | None                                   | 6 months     | ≥70% clinical remission               | Gastrointe stinal symptoms  |
| 11      | Azra Mohiti et al.[35]             | 1            | Neodymium-doped yttrium aluminium garnet (Nd:YAG) laser (1064 nm)                                                                                          | None                                   | 2 months     | Complete remission                    | None                        |
| 12      | Irna Sufiawati et al.[36]          | 1            | Diode laser + corticosteroid (type/concentration not reported)                                                                                             | None                                   | 6 weeks      | Excellent clinical improvemen t       | None                        |
| 13      | Leilei Zhou et al.[37]             | 73           | Total glucosides of paeony (TGP) + corticosteroids (type/concentration not reported)                                                                       | Corticosteroids                        | 6 months     | Superior lesion control               | Mild diarrhoea              |

The 35 included studies were grouped into five therapeutic approaches based on the type of

intervention investigated.

Pharmacological therapies were the most frequently investigated approach, accounting for 13 studies. These studies evaluated a wide range of pharmacological interventions, including topical and systemic corticosteroids, hydroxychloroquine, mycophenolate mofetil, methotrexate, total glucosides of paeony (TGP), and upadacitinib. Overall, these therapies demonstrated reductions in pain, improvement in clinical lesion severity, higher remission rates, and better disease control. However, systemic therapies were occasionally associated with adverse effects such as gastrointestinal disturbances and mild diarrhoea.

Laser- and light-based therapies comprised 9 studies which included diode laser therapy (660 nm and 980 nm), neodymium-doped yttrium aluminium garnet (Nd:YAG) laser therapy, photobiomodulation therapy (PBMT), and 5-aminolevulinic acid-mediated photodynamic therapy (5-ALA PDT). Most studies reported rapid lesion healing, significant pain reduction, decreased lesion size, and improved quality of life. Laser-based therapies were generally well tolerated, with only transient burning sensations reported after photodynamic therapy.

Natural and herbal therapies represented 7 studies. These studies investigated ozonized olive oil, curcumin-based formulations, probiotics, vitamin D supplementation, zinc combined with vitamin D, and other naturally derived agents. Most interventions produced symptomatic relief, reduction in lesion severity, improved mucosal healing, and favourable safety profiles, suggesting their potential role as adjunctive therapies for oral lichen planus.

Regenerative therapies accounted for 4 studies included platelet-rich plasma (PRP), injectable platelet concentrates and free soft tissue autografts. These regenerative approaches promoted ulcer healing, accelerated tissue regeneration, reduced recurrence, and demonstrated excellent biocompatibility with minimal or no reported adverse effects.

Targeted immunomodulatory therapies were evaluated in 2 studies. These studies investigated novel immune-targeted agents, particularly the Janus kinase inhibitor upadacitinib and mycophenolate mofetil, for patients with refractory oral lichen planus. Both studies demonstrated encouraging clinical improvement and sustained disease control, highlighting the potential of targeted immunomodulation as an alternative treatment strategy for patients unresponsive to conventional therapy.

#### 4.DISCUSSION

##### Pharmacological therapies

Pharmacological interventions represented the largest proportion of the included studies and continue to constitute the cornerstone of OLP management. Corticosteroids remain the first-line therapy because of their potent anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressive effects; however, prolonged treatment is associated with relapse and potential adverse effects. Consequently, several studies investigated steroid-sparing alternatives. Raj *et al.* <sup>(34)</sup> demonstrated that hydroxychloroquine produced clinical remission in more than 70% of patients after six months of therapy,

indicating its potential usefulness in patients with corticosteroid-resistant disease. Similarly, Myers *et al.* <sup>(25)</sup> reported favourable clinical improvement with mycophenolate mofetil, while Zhou *et al.* <sup>(37)</sup> showed that total glucosides of paeony combined with corticosteroids achieved superior lesion control compared with corticosteroids alone. These findings suggest that immunomodulatory agents may improve disease control while reducing corticosteroid dependence. Nevertheless, gastrointestinal disturbances and mild diarrhoea reported with some systemic therapies indicate that treatment selection should carefully balance efficacy with safety. <sup>(25, 34, 37)</sup>

##### Laser- and light-based therapies

Laser- and light-based therapies demonstrated consistent benefits in pain reduction, epithelial healing, and improvement in lesion severity. Derikvand *et al.* <sup>(28)</sup> reported complete healing of erosive lesions following treatment with a 980-nm diode laser, whereas Mameli *et al.* <sup>(33)</sup> observed rapid symptom resolution using a 660-nm diode laser. Likewise, Mohiti *et al.* <sup>(35)</sup> reported complete remission following Nd:YAG laser therapy, and Sulewska *et al.* <sup>(30)</sup> demonstrated sustained reduction in lesion size after 5-aminolevulinic acid-mediated photodynamic therapy. These findings indicate that laser-based therapies may provide an effective non-pharmacological alternative, particularly for patients who experience adverse effects or inadequate response to corticosteroids. However, differences in laser wavelength, irradiation parameters, treatment frequency, and follow-up duration limit the generalizability of these findings and emphasize the need for standardized treatment protocols. <sup>(28, 30, 33, 35)</sup>

##### Natural and herbal therapies

Natural and herbal therapies have gained increasing attention because of their favourable safety profile and potential anti-inflammatory properties. Tarun Kumar *et al.* <sup>(26)</sup> demonstrated that topical ozonized olive oil significantly accelerated lesion healing and reduced symptoms without reported adverse effects. Other studies evaluating curcumin, probiotics, vitamin D supplementation, zinc, and related natural products consistently reported improvements in pain, lesion severity, and mucosal healing. <sup>(14–19)</sup> Although these findings suggest that natural therapies may be useful adjuncts to conventional treatment, substantial variability in formulations, dosages, treatment duration, and study methodology limits direct comparison among interventions. Well-designed randomized controlled trials are therefore required before these therapies can be routinely recommended.

##### Regenerative therapies

Regenerative therapies represent an emerging strategy that focuses on tissue repair rather than solely suppressing inflammation. Merigo *et al.* <sup>(29)</sup> demonstrated complete healing of persistent ulcerative lesions following platelet-rich plasma (PRP) oral rinses, while Fallah Abed *et al.* <sup>(32)</sup> reported low recurrence rates after free soft tissue autografting. These approaches promote tissue regeneration, improve patient comfort, and exhibit excellent biocompatibility

with minimal adverse effects. However, the available evidence is primarily derived from case reports and small clinical studies, limiting the strength of current recommendations. Larger controlled clinical trials are required to establish their long-term efficacy and reproducibility. <sup>(29,32)</sup>

### Targeted immunomodulatory therapies

Targeted immunomodulatory therapies represent one of the most promising recent developments in OLP management because they selectively inhibit immune pathways involved in disease pathogenesis. Noot CH *et al.* <sup>(27)</sup> demonstrated sustained clinical improvement with the Janus kinase inhibitor upadacitinib in patients with refractory OLP, while Myers *et al.* <sup>(25)</sup> also reported encouraging outcomes with mycophenolate mofetil. These findings suggest that targeted immune modulation may become an effective treatment option for patients who fail conventional therapies. Nevertheless, current evidence remains limited by small sample sizes, lack of randomized controlled trials, and insufficient long-term safety data. Future multicentre studies are therefore essential before these agents can be incorporated into routine clinical practice. <sup>(25,27)</sup>

### Clinical implications

The evidence synthesized in this review indicates that OLP management is evolving towards personalized therapeutic strategies that combine symptom control with long-term disease management. While corticosteroids remain the standard of care, emerging pharmacological agents, laser-based therapies, regenerative approaches, and natural products have demonstrated promising clinical outcomes and may serve as effective adjuncts or alternatives in selected patients. Treatment decisions should therefore consider lesion characteristics, patient preferences, systemic health, and the quality of available evidence.

### Strengths and limitations

A major strength of this scoping review is its comprehensive mapping of recent therapeutic advances in oral lichen planus (OLP) using a systematic search conducted in accordance with the PRISMA-ScR guidelines. The inclusion of diverse study designs provided a broad overview of both established and emerging treatment approaches. However, the review was limited to English-language studies published between 2015 and 2025. Considerable heterogeneity in study design, interventions, outcome measures, and follow-up periods limited direct comparison among studies. Additionally, as a scoping review, no formal quality assessment or meta-analysis was performed; therefore, the findings should be interpreted as an evidence map rather than definitive evidence of treatment effectiveness.

### Future directions

Future research should focus on adequately powered multicentre randomized controlled trials with standardized treatment protocols, validated outcome measures, and extended follow-up periods. Comparative studies evaluating pharmacological, laser-

based, regenerative, and targeted immunomodulatory therapies are also required to establish evidence-based treatment algorithms for patients with oral lichen planus.

### 5. CONCLUSION

Oral lichen planus is a chronic, relapsing disorder that requires long-term management. Topical corticosteroids is the first-line treatment, emerging therapies, including laser- and light-based modalities, regenerative approaches, natural products, and targeted immunomodulatory agents, have shown promising results in improving pain, lesion resolution, and mucosal healing, particularly in refractory cases.

However, the available evidence is limited by heterogeneity in study design, treatment protocols, outcome measures, and follow-up duration. Therefore, multiple randomized controlled trials with standardized methodologies and long-term follow-up is needed to establish the comparative efficacy and safety of these interventions.

Overall, the management of oral lichen planus is evolving toward individualized, mechanism-based therapies, offering promising opportunities for improved patient outcomes and evidence-based clinical practice.

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