

Short Communication

Clothing dye dermatitis of the scrotum

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Case Report

A 69-year-old man presented with a 5-month history of redness and itching of the scrotum. He had been treated with potent topical corticosteroids, antifungals and emollients without benefit. There was erythema and oedema of the scrotum, with no involvement of the adjoining flexural or perianal skin.

He was patch tested to the European standard series and a perineal series comprising medicaments, corticosteroids, fragrances and clothing (textile) dyes (Trolab). There were strongly positive reactions to Disperse Orange 3, para-phenylenediamine (PPD), and para-aminoazobenzene, which persisted for 5 weeks. The patient was subsequently advised to wear white cotton underwear and light-coloured clothes. Within 5 weeks, his dermatitis was dramatically improved.

Discussion

Erythema, oedema and pruritus of the scrotum is a recognized feature of flexural psoriasis, seborrhoeic dermatitis, and dermatophyte infections. Rarer causes include zinc deficiency (1) and venomous bites (2). The scrotum is characterized by enhanced permeability and susceptibility to irritants (3), including topical 5-fluorouracil (4) and hexachlorophene (5), but allergic contact dermatitis is rarely reported. Clothing dermatitis localized to the scrotum is unusual, the disorder more typically affecting the axillae, neck and inner thighs, while sparing skin that is protected by underclothes (6).

At least 49 clothing dyes are known contact allergens, with the disperse class being the commonest (7). These dyes are used to colour man-made fibres. Disperse Or-

ange 3 is a member of the pare-group of substances that also includes para-aminoazobenzene and PPD. Reactions to 1 or more para-group compounds are common in patients with clothing dye dermatitis. However, a number of patients with dye sensitivity do not react to PPD. This means that the European standard series is unreliable when used alone in patch testing (7, 8).

The persistent nature of the patch test reactions in this patient may be unusual. To our knowledge, only 1 previous case of persistent reaction to textile dyes has been reported (9).

References

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