

Short Communication

'Lucky Luke' contact dermatitis from diapers with negative patch tests

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'Lucky Luke' contact dermatitis was first described in 1998 (1): a dermatitis localized to an area of the diapers reminiscent of a cowboy's gunbelt holsters.

At D2 and D3 we found negative results for all substances tested.

Case Report

A 3-month-old black girl presented with an eczematous dermatitis extending not only over the outer and upper buttocks but also over the hips, dating from 1 month before, always in this same area (Fig. 1). The mother denied any family history of atopy. At a 15-day follow-up, the dermatitis had been resistant to treatment (topical hydrocortisone and oral antihistamine) and only resolved when use of the diaper was eliminated and cotton pants substituted. One month later, the mother reported that the dermatitis had recurred after further use of the diaper. Because of the patient's young age, we performed patch tests with a restricted European standard series, including thiuram mix, mercapto mix and mercaptobenzothiazole, augmented with a rubber series, a corticosteroid series and cyclohexyl thiophthalimide 1%, reagents supplied by Chemotechnique on IQ Chambers.



Fig. 1. Eczema located on the upper outer buttocks and hips.

Discussion

'Lucky Luke' dermatitis is a very characteristic dermatitis of an area of the diapers in children. Only 9 cases have been described before, with ages varying from 9 months to 4 years. All patients have been patch tested and have shown sensitization to standard rubber chemicals, glues or other compounds such as cyclohexyl thiophthalimide, a retarder of vulcanization (1–3). The negativity of the patch tests in our patient could be because it was an irritant contact dermatitis, supported by the very young age of the patient, other than true sensitization. Rubber components are present in the antileaking system, which involves tight elastic bands around the thighs. Exposure to rubber components of the diapers from the 1st day of life might favour sensitization to these compounds, considered to be one of the most frequent sensitizers in childhood, along with metals and fragrance (4). Prolonged occlusion could be another element favouring the reaction. The typical localization of the dermatitis, its resolution after avoidance of the diapers, and the very young age of the patient, are all diagnostic signs of this form of dermatitis, which needs early identification to remove its cause. Our patient, who had the first manifestations at 1 month of life, is a further instance of an increasing cause of eczema in infancy.

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