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Acute irritant bullous contact dermatitis caused by *Euphorbia helioscopia*

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Many plants have the potential to cause contact dermatitis. *Euphorbia helioscopia* (Fig. 1) from the plant family *Euphorbiaceae* produces a typical milky sap that may cause blistering lesions and toxic reactions after contact with the skin and mucous membranes (1). The cases reported here draw attention to the cutaneous side-effects.

Case Reports

Two girls, aged 4 years and 5 years, respectively, presented with acute onset of itchy, inflamed, and blistered skin on their faces. They had been playing in the fields near their homes, and plants that they had plucked had touched their faces. The plant was identified as *E. helioscopia*. Examination of both patients showed multiple erythematous bullous lesions on their faces (Fig. 2). The



Fig. 1. *Euphorbia helioscopia*.



Fig. 2. Case 2.

patients were followed without treatment, and all lesions resolved within a week.

Discussion

E. helioscopia (sun spurge) is used in traditional medicine in Turkey to treat warts, rheumatic pains, and superficial tissue swelling (2). 12-Deoxyphorbol-13-phenylacetal-20-acetate is considered to be the most irritant component in the sap (3, 4).

The bullous lesions that developed on our patients' skin occurred after only brief exposure to the sap of the plants. Only a few cases of contact dermatitis associated with *E. helioscopia* have been reported previously in the literature (1, 5). The plants constitute a risk to children, who may be exposed to the sap during play, and to those who may be exposed when the plants are used in traditional medicine.

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