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Palpebral angioedema and allergic contact dermatitis caused by a cerumenolytic

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doi:10.1111/cod.12457

Key words: allergic contact dermatitis; angioedema; castor oil; cerumenolytic; patch tests.

Allergic contact dermatitis caused by castor oil has been rarely reported; most cases are related to the use of cosmetics (1–5).

Case Report

A 38-year-old woman developed mild erythema and pruritus of her left ear canal, along with swelling and palpebral oedema. These symptoms occurred 24 hours after the application of two drops of Otocerum® (Laboratory Reig Jofre, Barcelona, Spain) to clear a wax blockage. The patient was treated with intramuscular methylprednisolone and dexchlorpheniramine, and completely recovered in 3 days, without residual lesions. Six months later, she used Otocerum® again, and experienced a similar episode.

A prick test with pure Otocerum® was performed, and a negative result was observed on immediate, day (D)2 and D4 readings. A closed patch test (Nonwoven Patch Test Strips Curatest®; Lohmann & Rauscher International, Rangsdorf, Germany) with Otocerum® 'as is' and its components (castor oil, benzocaine, chlorobutanol, turpentine oil, and phenol, all 5% pet.) was also carried out on the volar surface of the forearm. Positive readings were obtained at D2 and D4 with Otocerum® (+++) and castor oil (+++) (Fig. 1). Patch tests with Otocerum® and its components were also performed on 5 healthy control patients, all with negative results.



Fig. 1. Patch test with castor oil.

Discussion

A few cases of allergic contact dermatitis caused by castor oil have been reported previously, mostly related to wart removers (1), lipsticks (2), deodorants (3), and makeup removers (4). There is only one previous report of allergic contact dermatitis caused by castor oil in a cerumenolytic. A woman developed urticarial lesions and facial swelling several hours after its use (5). She developed a positive patch test reaction to Otocerum® and castor oil (5% pet.) at D3.

We report an unusual case of allergic contact dermatitis caused by castor oil, which mostly manifested as palpebral oedema. In patients with allergic contact dermatitis caused by a cerumenolytic, patch testing with castor oil, along with other common sensitizers, should be considered.

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Conflict of interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding this work.

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