

the more reliable test material, due to its lack of irritancy.

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Nickel in "nickel-free" spectacle frames

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A 7-year-old boy with eczema on the bridge of the nose and under one of his eyes came to our clinic. He had a history of reactions to metal items; for example, his mother had covered the back of his jeans button with textile. Earlier he had had a pair of spectacles with metal frames, which had caused a similar eczema. Because his parents suspected that he reacted to nickel, they had bought a new pair, 782 Lassie 233 40 18115, Nickel Free, by Skaga, Sweden. On testing the frame with the dimethylglyoxime test (1), it showed a weak positive reaction. This nickel content was later confirmed by atomic absorption analysis done by the company. To confirm the boy's nickel allergy, a nickel-containing coin was applied for 2 days using Scanpor (Norgeplaster, Norway): he showed a +++ reaction at D4.

Discussion

It is well-known that spectacles may cause dermatitis. Published reports have recently been reviewed (2) in this journal. According to the manufacturer, the nickel con-

tent was due to the varnish applied to the frame. The varnish has now been changed. Nickel is a major contact allergen among children (3–5). This young boy came into contact with the allergen in a spectacle frame that was labelled "nickel-free". Labels and declarations cannot always be trusted.

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