

Airborne contact dermatitis from cigarettes

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Few cases of allergic contact dermatitis due to cigarettes have been reported (1–3). Most cases of contact dermatitis from tobacco have been shown as occupational irritant dermatitis (4). Recently,

an important sign, 2 lines of brownish pigmentation on and above the upper lip, was exhibited as pigmented type of airborne contact dermatitis due to smoke from cigarettes (3). Here, we experienced another case having the same dark brownish lines from the nostril to upper lip with brownish pigmentation on the face.

A 50-year-old woman visited us with a 7-year history of brownish pigmentation on the face. 2 darker brownish-pigmented lines were seen from the nostril to the upper lip (Fig. 1). A 2-day (D) patch test was done with 6 brands of cigarettes she had smoked, nicotine 4% aq., purified water, and pet. Each cigarette was patch tested with unsmoked tobacco as is, unsmoked filter as is, and unsmoked paper as is. Positive reactions were observed for the 3 brands of unsmoked tobacco as is at D2 (+), D3 (+), and D4 (+). We advised the patient to undergo counselling for quitting smoking.

We indicate that the repeated exposure to the smoke containing volatile ingredients from cigarette caused allergic sensitization and developed pigmented type of airborne contact dermatitis, as 2 darker brownish-pigmented lines were parallel to the exhalation flow with brownish pigmentation on the face. As we did not perform second patch testing, we could not identify the exact allergen(s).

The brownish pigmentation in our case developed on the entire face with 7-year history, suggesting that the face was severely affected than the previously reported case by Kato et al (3). We believe that the 2 pigmented lines are important manifestation to suspect airborne contact dermatitis from a substance included in the exhalation flow and that the eruption can develop beyond the lesion, on and above the upper lip, to the entire face like our case.

References

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Fig. 1. The patient showed two brownish lines from the nostril to upper lip with brownish pigmentation on the face.

cigarette and cigar factory employees.
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