

Short Communication

Acute contact dermatitis from a popular psoriasis remedy in Bulgaria

L. STRANSKY

Unit of Contact Dermatitis and Occupational Diseases of the Skin, Medical University, Alexandrov Hospital,
Sofia, Bulgaria

Key words: psoriasis; medicaments; tar; balsam of Peru; contact dermatitis. © Munksgaard, 1998.

In certain regions and communities in Bulgaria, psoriasis and hyperkeratotic eczema are successfully treated by a popular home remedy. A newspaper is rolled up and burned above a plate. On the plate, a tarry substance is formed under the ashes, and with this the lesions are treated 2× daily. A 32-year-old patient used it on his hands. A persistent yellowish pigmentation from the tar was followed 1 day later by a severe bullous reaction on the treated sites.

Patch testing with the European standard series (Trolab) was positive to balsam of Peru. The reaction was not

bullous and showed a “decrecendo” tendency, fading away by D4 and D7. Patch testing with tar, obtained from the same newspaper, gave a bullous reaction, persisting to D7.

I have observed good results in psoriasis not only from home-made tars but also from greases used for weapons, including the Kalashnikov submachine gun. The contact dermatitis in this case may have been related to the recycled paper of the newspaper or the printing inks used.