

CONTACT POINTS

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Allergic contact stomatitis presenting as geographical tongue with pruritus

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Allergic contact stomatitis is rare. We report a case of cobalt contact allergy in the mouth presented as an itching geographical tongue.

Case Report

A 7-year-old girl was referred to our department of stomatology for pruritus and pain in the mouth that started 9 months before. One year before, she had a traumatic avulsion of the upper left first incisor, which was replaced by a resin prosthesis maintained by a metallic hook. Clinical examination showed areas of depapillation and 1-cm erosion of the tongue. This presentation evoked a geographical tongue with traumatic erosion. The bacteriological sample and the blood test were normal. She received cetirizine 10 mg/day and methylprednisolone 1 mg/kg/day. After 1 week, all the symptoms had resumed but some depapillations were still present (Fig. 1). Prick tests did not show any pertinent reaction.

Patch test was performed according to recommendations of the International Contact Dermatitis Research Group (ICDRG) with Haye's Chamber Test[®]. Readings were undertaken at 2 and 3 days. Reactions were scored according to the criteria of the ICDRG. The patient was tested with

the European standard series as well as dental materials and a metal series (Chemotechnique, Malmö, Sweden). Only cobalt chloride (1.0% pet.) showed a positive reaction.

As the hook of the prosthesis contained cobalt, we removed it. This was followed by the resolution of the symptoms and the disappearance of any lingual lesions. No recurrence occurred.

Discussion

Geographic tongue (GT) is a frequent lesion in oral mucosa of children (1). GT is usually symptomless. Some burning sensations are reported (2). The aetiology is unknown. Some cases were associated with psoriasis or atopy (1).

Cobalt chloride is the third most frequent allergen in children (3). This metal is frequently used in the dental prosthesis. But oral manifestation of metal contact allergy is very rare.

In our case, pruritus was the main symptom. The erosion was caused by the patient herself. The diagnosis of allergic contact stomatitis is supported by the positive cobalt chloride patch test and the recovery after the removal of the metallic material.

She had no personal history of allergy and we do not know if the sensitization to cobalt chloride was due to the prosthesis or was foregoing.

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Fig. 1. Geographical tongue.