

Short Communication

Allergic contact dermatitis from *Krameria triandra* extract

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Case Report

A 28-year-old man, with a history of dyshidrotic hand eczema and haemorrhoids, began to apply perianally an antihemorrhoidal gel made at a herbalist's. 3 days later, he developed acute eczema with intense pruritus, oedema and vesiculation. On the 10th day of application, he presented with eczema on the perianal area, perineum, inner buttocks and thighs. He improved after stopping the gel and topical and oral corticosteroid treatment.

An open test with the gel showed slight positivity after 1 day. Patch testing was performed with GEIDC standard series and the antihemorrhoidal gel as is, Al-test® and Hypafix® being used for application and readings being made at 2 and 4 days according to ICDRG criteria. The gel was positive at 2 and 4 days. Fragrance and plant series (Chemotechnique®) and the constituents of the gel were also patch tested (Table 1). 20 healthy controls were patch tested with the gel as is, rhatany extract 1% pet. and 2% eth., with negative results. The manufacturer confirmed that neither mercurial derivatives nor eugenol were present in the excipients of the gel. Total IgE was 153.9 IU/ml.

Discussion

Peruvian rhatany, red rhatany, rhatanhia or rhatania (*Krameria triandra*) is a plant of the Krameriaceae family native to South America, particularly Bolivia and Peru (1). It is a low shrub with large red flowers, growing on dry, sandy places on mountain slopes, 3000 to 8000 feet above sea-level. Astringent, antidiarrhoeic and anti-inflammatory properties have been described (2). It has been used to treat pharyngitis, stomatitis, mouth sores, aphthae, laryngitis, diarrhoea, dysentery, menorrhagia, urinary incontinence, haematuria and chilblains. It has been used locally in herbal medicine for anal fissure and haemorrhoids.

The dried root is used for medical formulations. Its essential constituent is a particular tannic acid, known as rhataniatannic acid or krameria tannic acid, closely allied to catechu-tannic acid. Other constituents are rhatanin (a homologue of tyrosine) and rhataniaphenols

I and II. It also contains lignin, small quantities of gum starch and saccharine matter, and a particular acid, krameric acid (3).

Although rhatany tincture 5% eth. has been recommended for patch testing (4), in our case rhatany tincture 1% pet. and 2% eth. elicited positive reactions. A Medline® search found no reference to contact dermatitis from this plant or its extracts. We found only an old reference to a case similar to ours (5) in a textbook (6).

References

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Table 1. Patch test results

Allergens	Concentration and vehicle	D2	D4
GEIDC standard series			
fragrance mix	8% pet.	+++	+++
mercury	0.5% pet.	+++	+++
thimerosal	0.1% pet.	++	+++
antihemorrhoidal gel	as is	+++	+++
constituents of the gel			
rhatany tincture	1% pet.	++	++
rhatany tincture	2% eth.	++	++
<i>Centella asiatica</i>	1% pet.	—	—
<i>Centella asiatica</i>	2% eth.	—	—
excipient	as is	—	—
fragrance series			
(Chemotechnique)			
eugenol	1% pet.	++	+++
plants series			
(Chemotechnique)		—	—