

ANGELINA ANGIO-OEDEMA

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Cartoon case study

Although this case study has been presented in a somewhat jocular style, the account is factual, and tells the story of a patient who was seen at the Allergy Diagnostic and Clinical Research Unit.

The case was presented at the ALLSA congress in 2006, and the presentation graphics have been adapted for this cartoon that illustrates the essentials of the case of a delightful and courageous nun whose name is not really Angelina, but who truly suffers from recurrent angio-oedema.



*A kind and gentle nun,
By the name of Angelina,
Suffered something terrible
From recurrent angio-oedema.*



*She went to see her allergist
In a state of deep despair,
For her life as a result of it
Seemed way beyond repair.
The doctor took a history
And checked her top to toe.
The cause remained a mystery.
For tests she had to go.*



*A skin prick and a RAST were done
To check the IgE.
Looking at the test results
The doctor did agree;
The wheal was raised,
The flare was wide,
It seemed unequivocally,
That gluten was the obvious cause
Of the malady.*



*"Lose the morning slice of toast!"
The doctor did proclaim,
"And the sacred heavenly host,
If it's all the same.
'Tis they that start the itchy rash,
And cause your lips to swell.
It's the gluten in the wheat,
Dear one,
That makes your daily hell!"*



*Wheat-free mass became a hardship,
For Angelina so loved to worship!
Then one day
She made a discovery!
In the UK there is a bakery
That makes hosts
Without wheat entirely!
Right away she had them sent
By express registered mail.
But her efforts, I am afraid,
Came to no avail.
Though it seemed absurd,
The swellings still occurred!
The doctor did deliberate,
And the two of them concurred...
Perhaps those yellow wafers
Were coloured and preserved.
The result of the CAST returned,
And the puzzle, it seemed was solved:
The colourant and the benzoates
Were definitely involved!*



*And so she made the most
Of mass without the host,
But the daily bouts of swelling
Failed to decline.
Which made them think, perhaps,
There was something in the wine!
The CAST was unequivocal;
Sulphur dioxide was the culprit.
The situation was diabolical
For Angelina at the pulpit.
She still takes communion,
But with neither wine nor bread;
A silver cup of red grape juice
She sips upon instead.*

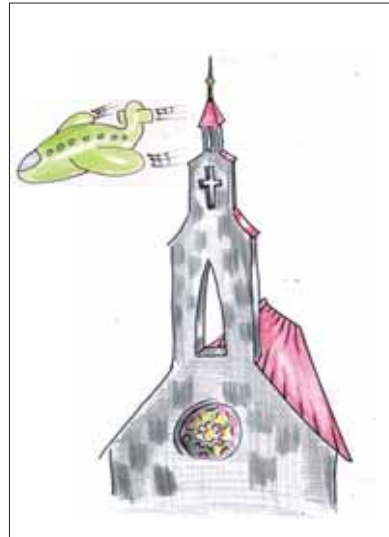
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*"Avoidance Angelina"
Was the name she soon adopted.
For a simple peasant diet
She reluctantly opted.
But despite her care and diligence,
And new-found label-vigilance,
Angelina could never tell
When next her lip would swell.*



*One day she developed flu,
Sucked a pink lozenge,
And took pen. V. too,
Lay down on the chaise lounge,
And the next thing she knew...
Her lip was as big
As a size seven shoe!
Even though the tests this time
Revealed no positive finding,
Something in the meds she took
Had got her IgEs binding!*



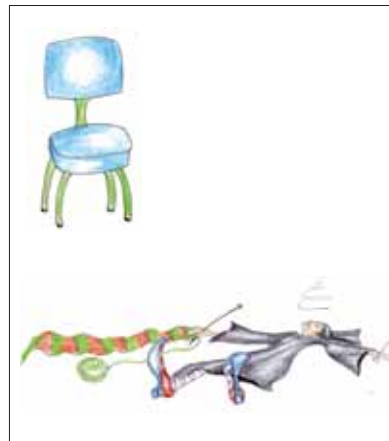
*One day she went to Jo'burg
To visit the sisters there.
She had a sip of wine,
And landed on her ear.
She found herself in casualty
Hooked up to lines and gas,
And concluded that for her,
It was not prudent to take mass
In a convent unfamiliar
With a condition so peculiar.*



*Once she saw a dentist,
And gave the chap a fright!
He had just said: "Open wide"
When she collapsed
And went quite white!
With his own adrenaline running
high,
He gave Angelina an amp in her
thigh.
Though she made a good recovery,
She still complains of a fair-sized
cavity.*



*With preparedness and care,
(And some trepidation)
Skin-prick tests were done
As a confirmation
That the local anaesthetic
Caused the prostration
Under the spotlight
In the adjustable chair,
And left the master of dentition
With a shock of white hair!*



*The result became quite clear
When Angelina fainted,
And slid quietly off her chair,
As she waited in the corner
For the wheals to appear.
Lignocaine is now
No longer an option
If she should need
A minor operation.*



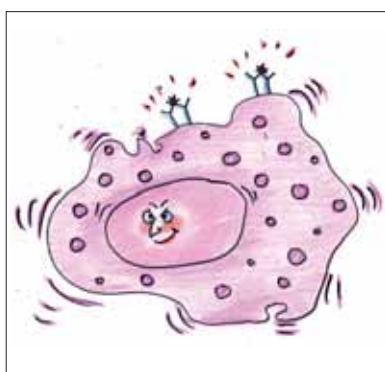
*Fibroids in her uterus
Were turning her quite pale,
And preservatives in the iron
Made that remedy fail.
She needed them out,
Under the knife,
But the general anaesthetic
Would endanger her life!
A panel of experts
Reached a consensus
That morphine and NSAIDs
Would truly be senseless.*



*So in an operating theatre,
Free of latex and the rest,
She bravely suffered surgery
On paracetamol IV!
Post-op she was smiling,
Sipping hot sweet tea,
And when asked for a comment,
She stated most humbly:
"Thank you Doc for caring,
I have such faith in thee!"*



*Armed to the teeth
With an adrenaline gun,
She has to be a careful
And most diligent nun
In avoiding the compounds
Ubiquitous
That threaten her something
Iniquitous!
The sulphurs and the benzoates,
The colourants and the wheat,
And the local anaesthetics
That take her off her feet!*



*Now she wears a bracelet
With a warning on the disc,
Of her severe condition,
And the potential risk
Of treating Angelina,
Even for a sneeze.
For her mast cells
Are a twitchy bunch,
And can bring her to her knees!*

Results of some of the special investigations performed in this case

CAST (cellular antigen stimulation test) Positive	Sodium benzoate Tartrazine Mivacurium Vecuronium Atracurium Sulphur dioxide
RAST (radioallergosorbent test) (specific IgE) Positive	Gluten
Drug challenge (skin-prick test) Positive	Mepivacaine 1: 10 000 dilution

NOTES ON ANGIO-OEDEMA

- Non-pitting oedema of dermis and subcutaneous tissue
- Face, tongue, lips and eyelids most commonly affected
- May be associated with anaphylaxis of any cause
- Multiple causes:
 - Foods
 - Drugs
 - Insect stings
 - Infections
 - C1 esterase inhibitor deficiency
 - Physical causes
 - Contact reactions
 - Systemic diseases
 - Autoimmune
 - Idiopathic

Declaration of conflict of interest

Drs Shaunagh Emanuel and Diane Hawarden declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCE

Kaplan AP, Katelaris CH. WAO GLORIA Angioedema Module. www.worldallergy.org/educational_programs/gloria/slides/Module7_Angioedema_0408.ppt (last accessed 26 September 2008).