

Ectopic contact dermatitis from henna

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Leaves and stems of the henna plant (*Lawsonia intermis*) are used worldwide as a red-brown hair dye and sometimes applied on nails or skin by women. It has also been used as an antifungal agent (1). The active ingredient, which is presumed also the main but not the only allergen, is lawsone, a naphthoquinone (2-hydroxy-1,4-naphthoquinone), associated with fats, resin and henna tannin in the leaf (2). In hair dyes, henna is used alone or associated with other colouring agents, such as parphenylenediamine (PPD).

Case Report

A 33-year-old woman had had recurrent, itchy, erythematous papules and papulovesicles on the eyelids, cheeks and forehead for 4 years, which kept recurring even after she stopped using all her cosmetics and skin-

care products. She used to apply henna on her nails (Fig. 1).

Patch tests were performed with the European standard series, a preservatives series and her own skin care products, including the henna used to dye her nails (2% aq.). Readings were done after 2 and 4 days. The patient showed ++ reactions to nickel and henna. The lesions disappeared after mild treatment and discontinuation of henna.

Discussion

Immediate reactions, such as urticaria, angioedema and asthma, have been described in relation to henna (2, 3). However, in spite of extensive use over many years, reports of contact dermatitis have been rare (4–7). Our case is unusual because of its presentation as an ectopic contact dermatitis, not affecting the nails or paronychia areas, but the eyelids, cheeks and forehead, as occurs in nail varnish dermatitis.

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Fig. 1. Henna used to dye nails.

Cement burns in 2 football players

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Key words: cement burns; lime; irritant contact dermatitis; calcium oxide; calcium hydroxide. © Munksgaard, 1997.

Skin injury from contact with cement may take place through 3 different mechanisms: contact sensitization to chromate and cobalt; mechanical friction from the rough surface of dry cement powder; chemical irritation due to

the lime component (free calcium oxide and hydroxide) (1). Moreover, cases have been sporadically reported of injuries related to lime dust per se (2, 3).

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