

Short Communication

Allergic contact dermatitis from colophonium in the sawdust of Asturian cider-bars

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Case Report

A 22-year-old student in Asturias (northern Spain), with no personal or family history of atopy, presented with acute itchy dermatitis of the face. On examination, there were exudative erythematovesicular areas around the mouth and on the nose, cheeks and ears. Treatment with systemic corticosteroid and topical antibiotic led to resolution, but fresh lesions reappeared on the face, hands, axillae and scrotum a few weeks later.

He was patch tested to the European standard series, giving a +++ reaction to colophonium. 10 days before the onset of the dermatitis, it transpired that he had started to work at the weekends in a typical Asturian cider-bar, where part of his job was to spread sawdust on the floor to keep it dry. Patch testing was completed with the pine sawdust used by the patient, as is and 10% pet., with ++ reactions to both. Since avoiding contact with sawdust, the dermatitis has cleared and there have been no more recurrences.

Discussion

Pine wood is a well-known source of sensitization to colophonium (1, 2). There have been cases from sawdust reported in patients working in livestock sheds (3), horse breeders (4), woodwork teachers (5), storekeepers (6) and joiners (7). By way of explanation, the floors of As-

turian cider-bars are always covered with sawdust, because of the traditional way there of pouring the cider: to increase its oxygenation, the cider is poured onto the edge of a special glass, held at knee height, from as high as the other arm can reach; thus, it is inevitable that some cider spills onto the floor, sawdust being used to absorb it.

References

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