

Comment

Mercury may induce circumscribed flexural pustuloderma. The "baboon syndrome" is a classical manifestation of mercury exanthem (though not specific to mercury) (1, 2). Our cases are unusual in their location of cutaneous lesions and erysipelas-like pattern. The location of erythema corresponded to the contact zone with the bed. The pathogenesis remains unknown (1, 2). Inhalation of mercury vapor would seem to be predicated by the facts that our patients had dropped their thermometers and had had no evident cutaneous contact with mercury (1-3). Breaking medical thermometers is

now the major cause of mercury exanthem. Alternatives should therefore be used.

References

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The relationship between clinical patterns, and exogenous and endogenous factors, in hand eczema

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Patients and Methods

138 hand eczema cases were investigated by a hierarchical log-linear analysis method to evaluate the interactions of sex, atopy, localization and contact sensitivity. Statistical analysis was performed with SPSS for Windows backward elimination program.

Results

In our series of 138 hand eczema patients, females predominated over males by 2.2/1. The palms were the most frequently involved region in females. In males, the frequency of involvement of each region did not differ significantly. Atopic history was found in 55 patients (40%). Contact sensitivity to 1 or more allergens tested was observed in 47 patients (33 females, 14 males). 21 of the 55 patients with an atopic history also had positive patch test reactions (Table 1).

Hierarchical log-linear analysis showed of a 3-way interaction between atopy, contact sensitization and local-

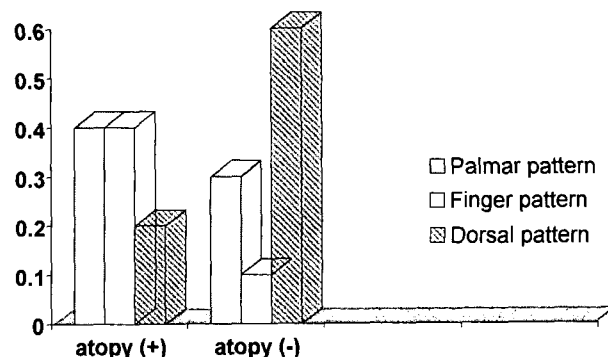


Fig. 1. The relationship between localization, atopy and a positive patch test.

ization and a 2-way interaction between localization and sex ($G^2=6.06$, $DF=9$, $p=0.734$). There was a positive correlation between atopy and a positive patch test in

Table 1. The distribution of patch test results and atopic history according to localization and sex

	Patch +						Patch -						Total		
	atopy +			atopy -			atopy +			atopy -			atopy +	atopy -	total
	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T			
palmar pattern	8	4	12	10	2	12	15	3	18	21	6	27	30	39	69
finger localization	5	2	7	1	1	2	6	3	9	9	11	20	16	22	38
dorsal pattern	2	-	2	6	5	11	5	2	7	5	4	9	9	20	29
all parts of hands	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	2
total	15	6	21	18	8	26	26	8	34	36	21	57	55	83	138

F: female. M: male. T: total.

both palmar and finger eczema cases, a significantly stronger relationship between atopy and patch test being observed with finger localization (odds ratio=7.77) than with palmar (odds ratio=1.5). In dorsal hand eczema cases, an inverse relationship was noted between atopy and a positive patch test (odds ratio=0.23) (Fig. 1).

Discussion

Women are in greater contact with soap, detergents and water and still deal more with housework and child care. Our observation of female predominance is in accordance with previous reports on hand eczema (1–3).

No such association as we found, between clinical patterns of hand eczema and etiology, has been found in previous studies (1, 4, 5).

References

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