

oil and "Schwedenkreuther", the latter diluted 1:10 and 1:50 in olive oil, revealed +++ reactions only to black cumin oil. Due to the known irritant potential of essential oils (2), patch testing with black cumin oil was repeated in dilutions of 1:100 and 1:200, resulting again in +++ reactions. Black cumin oil diluted 1:200 was subsequently patch tested in 10 controls without any reactions.

Discussion

The plant *Nigella sativa*, also known as black cumin, belongs to the family Ranunculaceae. Its seeds are used as a spice and an essential oil can be extracted from them. Another member of the Ranunculaceae is *Clematis vitalba*, a decorative garden plant, which has been reported to cause irritant contact dermatitis (3). Earlier reports of allergic contact dermatitis from essential oils concerned cosmetics and perfumes (4); later reports have

focussed on the use of essential oils as herbal remedies (1,5). To our knowledge, this is the 1st report of allergic contact dermatitis from topical black cumin (*Nigella sativa*) oil.

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Multiple sources of allergic contact dermatitis from parabens

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Case Report

A 14-year-old atopic girl (hyperactive bronchi) presented with a 5-year history of recurrent eczema on the palms and between the fingers. The eruptions always commenced with acute vesiculation and severe itching, followed by desquamation after about a fortnight. The first had occurred after she had handled a play gel "Slimy", which she manipulated with the palms of the hands.

Patch testing elsewhere in 1991 with the European standard series had been positive to nickel sulfate and paraben mix. Testing with the "Slimy" play gel on the upper arm for 2 days had provoked an erythematous, infiltrated reaction. Inquiries about the qualitative composition of the play gel had not revealed the causative allergen at that time. When she had suffered relapses after contact with water paints, dyeing agents were suspected. However, twice it appeared that parabens in topical medicaments and in a sunscreen were responsible.

She consulted us in 1996, and patch testing was performed with the European standard series, dyes (Disperse Orange 3, Disperse Yellow 3, Disperse Blue 35, Disperse Blue 106 and para-aminoazobenzene), and ingredients of the topical products used. Paraben mix (+) and nickel sulfate (++) were both positive after 2 and 4 days. The dyes and the ingredients of the topical preparations remained negative. Inquiries of the manufacturer as to the qualitative composition of the play gel were more successful this time and revealed the presence

of methyl- and propylparaben, along with diazolidinyl-urea, as preservatives. We then provided the patient with lists of parabens-free cosmetics and contraindicated topical medicaments.

In spite of this, the patient consulted us 1 week later with an acute vesicular dermatitis after washing her hands with a liquid soap (Sebamed) that was not mentioned on the lists but contained parabens.

Comment

Methyl- and propylparaben are present in many cosmetics and medicaments. Sensitization is found in about 1% of patch-tested patients, particularly in those with leg ulcers and stasis dermatitis. Parabens rarely cause sensitization in healthy, undamaged skin and are therefore considered particularly safe in cosmetics (1-3). Their increased use, in order to replace more sensitizing preservatives (4), might make it difficult to find suitable alternative cosmetics for the parabens-sensitive patient. To the best of our knowledge, no previous case of a contact allergy to parabens in a play gel has been reported.

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Allergic contact dermatitis due to methiocarb (Mesurol)

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Case Report

A 35-year-old carnation grower developed acute severe hand eczema. He continued his work in spite of this. Several topical corticosteroids were used without therapeutic benefit. Patch tests with the European standard series were positive to potassium dichromate (++) and wool

wax alcohols (++). The hand dermatitis failed to improve when contact with these allergens was avoided. Additional patch tests were carried out with several pesticides he had in store (Table 1 a-d), a standard pesticide series (van der Bend, Brielle, The Netherlands) (Table 1 e-l) and the leaf and flower of a carnation. The results of additional patch testing are summarized in Table 1. Only methiocarb (Mesurol) was positive (Fig. 1).

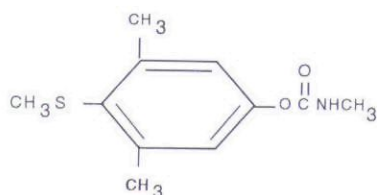


Fig. 1. Chemical structure of methiocarb (Mesurol).

Discussion

Occupational contact dermatitis from pesticides still seems to be puzzling, considering the extent of their use (1). Picking plants and bundling or cutting flowers are considered important sources of sensitization (2). Methiocarb (3,5-dimethyl-4-(methylthio)phenol methylcarbamate; Mesurol) is produced by Bayer (3) and used as an insecticide or molluscicide (3). It has a cholinesterase-inhibiting effect owing to its aromatic alkyl sulfide structure (3, 4). Although the use of pesticides in general has greatly increased in recent decades, reports on their dermatological effects are sporadic (1-6). True sensitization to dithiocarbamates and thiurams (e.g., ziram, zineb, maneb, benomyl) and clinical contact allergy have been reported (5, 6). Sensitization to these pesticides did not appear to have occurred in our patient (Table 1). Cronin (1) advised patch testing methylcarbamates at 1% pet. Methiocarb was tested in the present case at 0.5% pet. As far as we know, allergic contact dermatitis due to methiocarb has not been reported previously.

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Table 1. Results of patch testing

		D2	D3
Pesticides and fungicides in store (a-d)			
(a) Mesurol (methiocarb)	0.5% pet.	-	++
(b) Agral LN (nonylphenol-polyglycol-ether)	1% pet.	-	-
(c) Amire (imidacioprid)	0.5% pet.	-	-
(d) Nissuron (10% hexythiazox)	1% pet.	-	-
Standard pesticide series (Van der Bend, Brielle, The Netherlands) (e-l)			
(e) captan (N-(trichloromethylthio)-4-cyclohexene-1,2,-dicarboximide)	0.1% pet.	-	-
(f) zineb (zinc ethylenebis (dithiocarbamate))	1% pet.	-	-
(g) maneb (ethylenebis (dithiocarbamate) manganese)	1% pet.	-	-
(h) ziram (zinc dimethyldithiocarbamate)	1% pet.	-	-
(i) captafol (N-(1,1,2,2,-tetrachlorethylthio)-4-cyclohexene 1,2-dis-carboximide)	0.1% pet.	-	-
(j) folpet(N-(trichloromethylthio) phthalimide)	0.1% pet.	-	-
(k) pyrethrum	2% pet.	-	-
(l) benomyl (1-(butylcarbomoyl)-2-benzimidazole carbamic acid methyl ester)	0.1% pet.	-	-

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