

sensitization to dermatophagoides mites is prevalent, storage mites have, over time, achieved more clinical relevance (1, 2). Their pathogenicity as aeroallergens is widely known. However, they are also implicated in cutaneous pathology.

Storage mites have been described as inducers of occupational allergy in agricultural environments. They can cause asthma, rhinitis, rhinoconjunctivitis and dermatitis in handlers of cured ham as well as anaphylaxis through ingestion of contaminated foods (3–8).

*Tyrophagus putrescentiae* is a storage mite from the Acaridae family. It has been described as infesting various stored foodstuffs containing high lipid and protein content such as ham, cheese, kippers, some dry fruits and grain.

What follows is a case concerning urticaria-dermatitis in a sales assistant working in a supermarket delicatessen as a sales woman.

### Clinical Case

A 24-year-old female with no previous pathology developed hand itching dermatitis 2 years ago. She has erythematous and desquamative lesions on the palm, fingers and recently, the dorsum of each hand. She has been working in the supermarket, selling and handling pork products for 5 years. The dermatitis worsens when she handles cured ham and serum sausage. However, she tolerates the ingestion of these foodstuffs while the itching lessens and her condition improves when on holiday.

Prick tests (commercial SPT extract, Alk-Abelló) were performed with common aeroallergens, moulds,  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin,  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin, casein, gluten, egg, pork and chicken. Prick-prick tests with chorizo, serum boiled pork, bacon and ham surface were also performed.

*Tyrophagus putrescentiae* proved positive with 16-mm swelling; ham surface was positive with 5-mm swelling.

Patch tests with European standard series, the foodstuffs in question and *T. putrescentiae* (using SPT extract) were performed. Nickel sulfate, cobalt chloride and *T. putrescentiae* showed positive. The patient suffers from contact dermatitis through contact with metal.

*Tyrophagus putrescentiae* was identified in the ham she reacted posi-

tive to and in other hams stored at her workplace.

She was diagnosed as suffering from contact urticaria-dermatitis due to *T. putrescentiae*.

### Discussion

Sensitization to *T. putrescentiae* is usually associated with sensitization to Dermatophagoides mites or other storage mites (9, 10). In this case, the patient is only sensitized to *T. putrescentiae* (SPT were performed on *Dermatophagoides pteronyssinus*, *Dermatophagoides farinae*, *Lepidoglyphus destructor*, *Acaro siro* and *T. putrescentiae*).

The patient only suffers cutaneous symptoms. She does not suffer from rhinitis, conjunctivitis, asthma or any symptoms through ingestion. Sensitization has been caused exclusively through cutaneous contact. The use of patch tests with aeroallergens is suitable in this case to explain the relationship between the prick test result and the patient's symptoms. Other authors have also emphasized the importance of its use (11).

Contamination of serum sausage and other types of meat may explain the symptoms caused when the patient handled other products. Therefore, *T. putrescentiae* should be considered as an occupational agent in the handling of cured ham.

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### Occupational contact urticaria-dermatitis by *Tyrophagus putrescentiae*

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M<sup>a</sup> Dolores Quiñones Estévez

Allergy Section, Clínica Rozona, Asturias, Spain

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### Introduction

Dust mites are important causative agents of allergic diseases. Although

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Address:

M<sup>a</sup> Dolores Quiñones Estévez

C/José Cueto n°68, 3°C

33401-Avilés

Asturias

Spain

Tel: +34 985561709

e-mail: quinonesd@telefonica.net