

Short Communication

Contact urticaria from roe deer meat and hair

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The roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) belongs to the deer (Cervidae) family and its habitat is widespread throughout Europe, the Middle East and Northern Asia. It is reddish-brown in summer, greyish in winter, with a white rump patch, and known for its nimbleness and grace.

Case Report

A 21-year-old male hunter had a history of rhinoconjunctivitis, with hypersensitivity to the perennial allergen *Dermatophagoides pteronyssinus* and the seasonal allergens grass and rye pollen, but no previous history of skin symptoms. He had had contact with game since childhood, as he went hunting with his grandfather and later on by himself. Game from the region (red deer, roe deer, etc.) was gathered and stored around his farm until being sold. He reported developing localized urticaria after contact with raw meat and hair of the roe deer over the past 2 years. Contact urticaria was accompanied by severe itching, erythema and wheal-and-flare reactions on the hands and forearms, especially when disemboweling a deer in the field without gloves. The same symptoms appeared each time that he handled the meat and whole animal, though no signs of aggravation of

rhinoconjunctivitis or other systemic symptoms occurred. He tolerated well the ingestion of cooked roe deer meat and meat of related animal species. He did not experience similar symptoms after contact with other game such as red deer, chamois, rabbit or pheasant.

Prick tests confirmed the underlying immediate-type sensitization. Rub tests with raw roe deer meat and hair were positive (Fig. 1). A prick-by-prick test (1) with roe deer meat gave a wheal reaction (5-mm diameter). The same tests were negative in 3 atopic control subjects. Total serum IgE was normal (87.1 kU/l) but specific IgE to fallow deer (*Dama dama*) yielded a RAST class 2 (1.04 kU/l). A commercial RAST to roe deer antigen is not yet available.

Comment

Contact urticaria and protein contact dermatitis from several animal proteins are well-documented and often occur occupationally in slaughtermen, farmers or veterinary surgeons (1–6). In our case, the long-lasting and intensive contact with roe deer in an atopic person may have been a predisposing factor for the development of contact urticaria. However, the route of sensitization, whether via the respiratory tract, cutaneous contact or ingestion, remains uncertain. To the best of our knowledge, this is the 1st report of contact urticaria from roe deer meat and hair.

References

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Fig. 1. Result of rub test.

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