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Univ di Roma Due Tor Vergata

CONTACT DERMATITIS

ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL DERMATITIS

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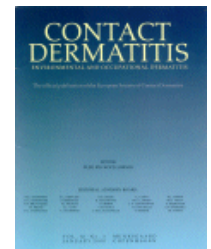
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Contact Dermatitis

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Volume 46 Issue 2

Occupational protein contact dermatitis from spices in a butcher: a new presentation of the mugwort-spice syndrome

Mark David Anliker^{1, 2}, Siegfried Borelli^{1, 2} and Brunello Wüthrich²

Protein contact dermatitis to meat is well known in butchers; spices are another source of potential contact allergy and usually are not recognized. We present a first case of contact-dermatitis to spice mix in a 39-year-old-butcher. The patient underwent skin prick testing (SPT) with standard allergens (ALK) and different meat and spice extracts (Stallergènes), scratch-patch testing with spice mix containing glutamate, paprika and other spices. Specific serum-IgE was measured with CAP-FEIA. SPT only showed an immediate-type sensitization to mugwort (+ +), as well as different spices (paprika +, curry +, cumin +) and camomile (+ + +). Scratch-patch tests were negative for different meat, but strongly positive for spice mix (+ + +) after 30 min (wheal and flare) and (+ +) after 48 h (infiltration and vesiculation). Two healthy controls were tested negative for spice mix used from that patient (scratch-patch). Specific IgE was slightly elevated for paprika 0.47 kU/L (CAP class 1), anise 0.43 kU/L, curry 0.36 kU/L and mugwort 3.83 kU/L. Sx1 atopy-multiscreen was 3.8 kU/L due to a sensitization to mugwort alone. The tests performed demonstrate an IgE-mediated contact allergy to spices but also a delayed type allergy to spice mix as a manifestation of the mugwort-spice syndrome in this individual. When testing for occupational dermatitis in butchers, protein contact allergy to spices must also be taken into consideration.

Investigating the factors leading to occupational dermatitis in butchers includes the search for contact allergy to meat proteins, glove materials, contact urticaria to latex and all sources of protein as well as cumulative toxic and mechanic influences. Protein contact dermatitis from meat is well known in butchers (1–3). Spices are another source of potential contact allergy and are usually not recognized. We present a first case of contact dermatitis from spice mix in a 39-year-old-butcher.

Case Report

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With a history of childhood asthma and a negative history for eczema, the patient had been working as a butcher for 23 years and had developed work-related hand eczema in the last 3 years (Fig. 1). For the past 1–2 years he had also felt a stomach-ache after eating curry. At the work place he had skin contact with all kinds of meat and a universal spice mix (Beer-Grill: Poulet, Zürich, Switzerland) which was used for different meats as a grill marinade; he did not wear gloves at the time. During vacations he experienced a great improvement of his hand eczema.

Methods

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The patient underwent skin prick testing (SPT) with routine allergens (ALK, Horsølm, Denmark) (*Dermatophagoides pteronyssinus*, *Dermatophagoides farinae*, *Alternaria alternata*, *Cladosporium herbarum*, *Aspergillus fumigatus*, *Penicillium notatum*, Cat and dog dander, birch, alder, hazel, ash, oak, grass, rye and mugwort pollen, latex and *Ficus benjamina*) and spice, meat and food extracts (Table 1) (Stallergènes, Cedex, France). Scratch testing and scratch-patch testing was conducted with different raw meat and spice mix (Beer-Grill:

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