

Airborne allergic contact dermatitis to methylchloroisothiazolinone/methylisothiazolinone in ironing water

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Clinical Case

A 47-year-old woman presented with a 6-month history of an eczematous eruption affecting the face, neck, arms, hands, and vulva (Fig. 1). She worked as a domestic cleaner, which included regular ironing. The facial eczema was exacerbated within a few hours of using Comfort™ Vaporesse® (perfumed ironing water) in her iron (Fig. 2). The condition resolved spontaneously when she was on holiday for 2 weeks but recurred when she recommenced ironing with Comfort™ Vaporesse®. She had a long history of mild eczema.

Patch testing to the British Standard Series, her own cosmetics and the Comfort™ Vaporesse® ironing water was performed. There were positive reactions to cobalt (D2–/D4+), methylchloroisothiazolinone/methylisothiazolinone (MCI/MI 3:1) (D2+/D4+) and Fragrance Mix II (D2+/D4+). Reaction to undiluted Comfort™ Vaporesse® at 4D was negative.

Comfort™ Vaporesse® contains MCI/MI but does not contain any of the constituents of Fragrance Mix II (personal communication with Unilever UK Technical Management Group, 15 September 2006). This is consistent with an airborne allergic contact dermatitis to MCI/MI (3:1) in the ironing water. Since avoiding exposure to products containing MCI/MI the patient's eczema has resolved.

Discussion

MCI/MI is a biocide widely used in cosmetics and body care products.



Fig. 1. Facial eczema.

It is also found in industrial products including paints, oils, glues, and water-cooling systems. Multiple cases of airborne allergic contact dermatitis to MCI/MI in wall paints have previously been reported (1–3). We believe that this is the first reported

case of airborne allergic contact dermatitis to MCI/MI in ironing water. This case highlights the need to consider possible airborne exposure, including ironing water, in patients with MCI/MI allergy who have facial eczema.

References

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Fig. 2. Comfort™ Vaporesse® ironing water.