

Short Communication

Cistus ladanifer contact dermatitis

J. J. GARCÍA-GONZÁLEZ, V. CRESPO¹, D. BARBER², A. MIRANDA, J. M. VEGA-CHICOTE, M. J. CARMONA,
M. A. NEGRO, M. LOMBARDEO², A. AMEAL AND J. M. BARCELÓ-MUÑOZ

¹Allergy Section and Dermatology Section, Carlos Haya Regional Hospital, 29009 Málaga, Spain

²ALK-Abelló+, Madrid, Spain

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The rockrose *Cistus ladanifer* is a plant belonging to the Cistaceae family found in southwestern Europe (Spain, Portugal) and northwestern Africa (Morocco, Algeria).

A 32-year-old engineer, with a previous history of atopic rhinitis due to housedust mite, developed dermatitis on both hands after beginning a new construction project in the countryside. He was also an amateur botanist, and after identifying the plants surrounding his working area, suspected that *Cistus ladanifer* could be the cause.

On patch testing, TRUE TestTM (Pharmacia Upjohn, Hillerød, Denmark) was negative. Rockrose leaves were extracted at 10% (w/v) in 1.8% NaCl (90 min, 4°C, magnetic stirring). After centrifuging, the supernatant was dialyzed against 1.8% NaCl (MW cut-off 3500 Da) and filtered through 0.22 µm. For prick testing, the rockrose extract was glycerinated at 50% (5% w/v). The prick test was weakly positive (wheal size 15 mm²) with a greater late response (30 mm²). Specific IgE determination by RAST, using activated paper discs with the dialyzed *Cistus ladanifer* extract, was negative. Patch tests with a rockrose leaf and with the *C. ladanifer* extract were applied for 2 days (D), and readings made at D2, D3 and

D7. Both the leaf and the extract were clearly positive and were negative in non-atopic control subjects. Skin biopsy was compatible with contact dermatitis. An immunofluorescence study (anti-IgG, IgM, IgA, C3 complement component and fibrinogen) carried out on skin biopsies was negative. The patient no longer had symptoms after avoiding further contact with the plant.

To our knowledge, this is the 1st case report of allergic contact dermatitis caused by *Cistus ladanifer*, though English & Cronin (1) reported a positive open test to a leaf of another rockrose, *Cistus creticus*, in a housewife whose dermatitis improved when the plant was removed from her garden (there is a fine colour plate of this plant in Lovell (2)). Involvement of a low-MW non-protein *C. ladanifer* component is being studied.

References

1. English J S C, Cronin E. Allergic contact dermatitis from *Cistus creticus*. *Contact Dermatitis* 1988; 18: 123.
2. Lovell C R. *Plants and the skin*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993: 130.