

Contact dermatitis from a nickel-containing bindi

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Case Report

A 33-year-old woman presented with a 2-year history of recurrent eczema localized to her central forehead where she typically wore her bindi. She typically developed symptoms of pruritus followed by palpable erythema 8 h after application of the bindi. She had worn a bindi 3 days before her patch test appointment. She gave a history of sensitivity to inexpensive jewelry. She had a family history of atopy, no personal history of atopy and was otherwise well, with no known allergies. On examination, there was a circular area of red scaly skin on her central forehead.

She was patch tested to the European standard series, her bindi and its plastic adhesive backing, and on D2 and D4 was positive to nickel sul-

fate 5% pet. (++) and the metal bindi (++)). A positive dimethylglyoxime test on the bindi confirmed nickel release. The patient was treated with a moderately potent topical corticosteroid and has been advised to avoid bindis made of inexpensive metals.

Discussion

A bindi is an item of traditional dress jewelry, usually disc shaped, worn by Hindu women for socioreligious reasons and indicates married status. Bindis are placed in the centre of the forehead and nowadays may have self-adhesive backings. Increasingly, bindis are being worn by single and non-Hindu women as fashion accessories. They are made of many different materials. Contact dermatitis has been reported from Disperse Blue 124 (1% pet.) and Disperse Blue 106 (1% pet.), dyes used to colour some bindis (1). Contact depigmentation has also been reported from para-tertiary-butylphenol (1% pet.) in adhesive used to secure some bindis (2).

Kumkum and tilak are alternative names for bindi: instead of being applied as a self-adherent disc they are made as a mark. Kumkum is typically red in colour and can be marked with many materials, including lipstick (containing eosin), vermilion powder (containing carbon soot) in

liquid or paste form, turmeric powder (3), sindhoor powder containing lead sulphide and mercury, starch powder and azo dye-containing chalk powder. All have been implicated as contact allergens (3), with some red kumkum colourants, such as Brilliant Lake Red R, being additionally implicated in pigmented contact dermatitis (4).

Nickel remains a common contact allergen. To our knowledge this is the 1st report of contact dermatitis due to nickel in a bindi.

References

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