

CONTACT POINTS

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Occupational airborne dermatitis from gordolobo (*Verbascum densiflorum*)

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Case Report

A 33-year-old man employed as a technician of machine reparations in a medicinal herbs industry for 2 years presented with 1-year history of an itchy red papular eruption on both eyelids, antecubital and popliteal flexures, hands, and wrists. He had no personal history of atopy. The severity of the lesions reduced on vacations but worsened after returning to work. He repaired the machines where herbs were mixed and packed but he did not touch the plants directly.

Patch tests with the European Standard series and our plants series were negative at Day 2 and Day 4.

He brought us the herbs mixtures and infusions made from the plants they worked with. These 30 final products composed of dried leaves, roots, and flowers were tested. A positive reaction was observed to a dried herbs mixture named 'Bronil'; its constituents were tested individually. The following results were obtained:

	48 h	96 h
Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>)	(–)	(–)
Birch (<i>Abis homolepis</i>)	(–)	(–)
Elecampane (<i>Inula helenium</i>)	(–)	(–)
Lichen of Iceland (<i>Cetraria islandica</i>)	(–)	(–)
Gordolobo (<i>Verbascum densiflorum</i>)	(+ +)	(+ + +)

Patch testing with gordolobo in 10 controls patients, 5 atopics and 5 non-atopics, was negative.

Discussion

Gordolobo is the Spanish common name of different plants from Scrophulariaceae Family, Genus *Verbascum*. In our case *Verbascum densiflorum*. This plant is found in minor Asia, north Africa, and eastern Europe where the gordolobo specimen provided by our patient comes from (Bulgaria). Infusion of leaves and stems is used as a folk treatment for cough, bronchitis, asthma, anaemia, and gastroenteritis. Previous reports of occupational dermatitis from gordolobo have been described (1, 2) but in those cases the responsible herb species was *Verbascum thapsus*.

Because of the clinical features and the distribution of the lesions, air-exposed zones, we suspected an airborne dermatitis.

Our patient is now working in the same job, but he avoids working in the area where gordolobo is mixed and packed, and the severity of the lesions has reduced. Due to the growing use of medicinal herb products, it may be important to know about the possibility of allergic reactions to them.

References

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