

Short Communications

Xanthomatous reaction following contact dermatitis from vitamin E

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Vitamin E is now widely used topically for its 'anti-aging' effect. More than 20 cases of allergic contact dermatitis from it have been described from creams, soaps and deodorants (1).

Case Report

A 30-year-old woman was prescribed topical vitamin E (liquid after pricking Cap. Evion 400 i.u.) by her local physician for post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation following a superficial injury to the right cheek. She developed erythematous papules and vesicles over the site and was referred to us. A clinical diagnosis of allergic contact dermatitis from vitamin E was made, she was advised to stop the application, and treatment with topical clobetasone butyrate was started. Although the time of onset of dermatitis and initial improvement on withdrawal of topical vitamin E supported the diagnosis of contact dermatitis from vitamin E, we could not perform patch testing, as the patient would not give her consent due to the cosmetically disturbing nature of the dermatitis. After 3 weeks, we noted scattered yellowish soft velvety papules and plaques over the site of healed dermatitis. A punch biopsy was taken and histopathologic examination revealed an admixture of foamy cell (xanthoma cells) among inflammatory cells. An occasional Touton giant cell was also seen.

Comment

Different clinical patterns of contact dermatitis from vitamin E have been reported, including localized and gen-

eralized eczema (2), contact urticaria, and erythema-multiforme-like reaction (3). Diffuse xanthoma developing in photosensitive eczema and following erythroderma have been reported (4). Cholesterol deposition is not infrequent in inflammatory disorders, where it appears to result from the liberation of lipids in tissues. These lipids are ingested by histiocytes, producing the characteristic foam cell seen in histological section (5). It is debatable in this case whether this lipid is of endogenous origin or derived from the oily base of vitamin E. To the best of our knowledge, such a peculiar xanthomatous reaction to topical vitamin E has not been reported before.

References

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