

Facial eczema from sunscreen: *Scutellaria baicalensis*, a novel allergen beginning to attract attention

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The inclusion of botanical agents in (homemade) cosmetic products is responsible for more and more contact dermatitis in patients.

Case Report

A 53-year-old man with a history of lupus erythematosus returned home from a 10-day vacation in the Caribbean with facial eczema. He had carefully applied the sunscreen Anthelios from La Roche-Posay several times a day during his vacation and after his return, too. The eczema occurred only when he returned home to France and he noted that the more he applied the sunscreen, the worse the eczema became (Figure 1). Initial patch tests and photo-patch tests were performed with the European baseline series, with a series of photoallergens (Chemotechnique Diagnostics, Vellinge, Sweden) and with the sunscreen “as is”. Only readings of the sunscreen product were positive at the irradiated (+) and non-irradiated (+++) sites at day (D) 2 (Online supplemental Figure 2). Subsequently, patch tests and photo-patch tests were performed with the ingredients of the sunscreen, which were kindly provided by La Roche-Posay. This time, the only positive patch test was to *Scutellaria baicalensis* extract, tested 0.2% in 50/50 water/alcohol at the non-irradiated site at D2 (++). We advised the patient to avoid cosmetics or food supplements containing *S. baicalensis* by reading the ingredient labellings.

Discussion

This is the third reported case worldwide of contact dermatitis from *S. baicalensis*.^{1,2} *S. baicalensis* is a plant found in Russia, China, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia, having antioxidant, antitumoral,³ and antiviral⁴ properties. As it is used more and more, we may witness more cases of contact allergy to it. The fact that the patch test with *Scutellaria* was negative at the

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irradiated site is consistent with the clinical history. This different result for the sunscreen patch test can be explained either by the potential immunosuppressive effect of ultraviolet A radiation, by a molecular interaction between components of the sunscreen when irradiated, or by a concentration problem in the *Scutellaria* patch test applied to the irradiated site. In conclusion, dermatologists may be facing a novel emerging allergen and must be aware of *S. baicalensis*.

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Figure 1 : 53-year old with facial eczema after repetitiv sunscreen application

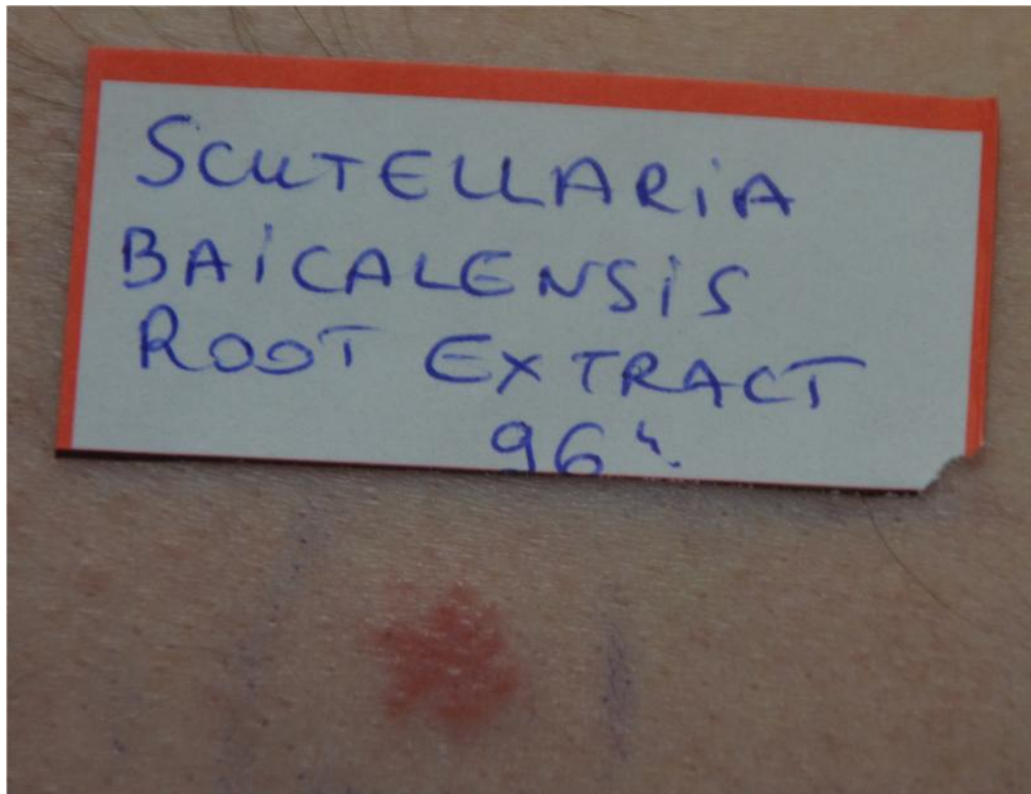


Figure 2 : Positive non-irradiated patch test at day 4 with *Scutellaria baicalensis* extract