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Contact allergy to musk moskene in a perfumed moisturizing cream

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Key words: allergic contact dermatitis; musk moskene; fragrance; fragrance mix; cosmetics; balsam of Peru; oak moss; patch testing technique; false-negative reaction; cross-sensitivity. © Munksgaard, 1997.

Case Report

A 56-year-old woman presented with acute facial eczema within a few weeks of using a new moisturizer. There was no past history of skin disease. The eczema failed to respond to topical therapy but settled after a course of oral prednisolone. Patch testing was carried out (Finn Chambers® on Scanpor® tape, read at 2 and 4 days) to a modified standard series, a face series, the patient's own perfume, hairspray and cosmetics, and the facial moisturizer suspected. She had positive patch test reactions to musk ambrette in the face series (++), the facial moisturizer as is (++) and the perfume in the moisturizer at 5% (++) and 1% (+). 50 controls tested to the perfume at 5% were negative. Further patch testing to the individual ingredients of the perfume revealed positive reactions to oak moss 2% pet. (++) and musk moskene 5% pet. (++) . Patch testing to the oak moss in the fragrance mix was also positive (++) , despite a negative patch test to fragrance mix itself. Photopatch tests were not performed.

Discussion

In the standard series, fragrance mix and balsam of Peru are used for screening for perfume sensitivity and are estimated to detect 70–80% and 50% of allergic reactions, respectively (1). Johansen & Menné (2) have reviewed the frequency of reactions to fragrance mix and its constituents. Although 5.5% of 8215 patients had positive reactions to fragrance mix, only 1/2 had reac-

tions to 1 or more of the individual constituents. Conversely, as in our patient, a negative reaction can occur to fragrance mix with a positive reaction to 1 or more of the ingredients (3).

Musk moskene is the trade name for 1,1,3,3,5,-penta-methyl-4,6-dinitroindan. It has been reported as not causing phototoxicity, photoallergy or contact sensitivity in the guinea pig (4). However, it has been reported as causing facial pigmented contact dermatitis due to its presence in the perfume of a rouge (5). Cross-reactions between musk ambrette and musk moskene have previously been reported (6).

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