

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Allergic contact dermatitis to anethole in a preventive pressure ulcers solution

Editor

Corpitolinol 60 (Laboratoires URGO, Chenôve Cedex, France) is an oily solution indicated for patients at risk of developing pressure ulcers. In France, Germany, China and other countries it is marketed under the name of Sanyrene® (Laboratoires URGO). In Spain it is known as Corpitol® (Laboratoires URGO), its use is recommended by the Spanish Group for the Research into Pressure Ulcers and it is used widely not only for prevention of pressure sores but also for vascular ulcers.

Corpitol® is 99% composed of hyperoxygenated glycerides of essential fatty acids [including linoleic acid (60%), linolenic acid, tocopherol (vitamin E)...] and aniseed perfume 1%. We describe two cases of suspected allergic contact dermatitis to this solution.

A 73-year-old woman presented with chronic eczema on the lower legs, which she had had for 8 months. She had applied Corpitol® and different moisturizing creams without healing.

Patch tests with the Spanish baseline series, leg ulcers series (Chemotechnique Diagnostics®, Vellinge, Sweden), Corpitol® as is, trans-anethole (5% pet.), anise alcohol (10% sof), tocopherol (pure) and tocopherol acetate (10% pet.) were performed. A positive reaction (++) at D2 and D4 to trans-anethole was observed. Corpitol had a weak positive reaction (+) at D7. The eczema disappeared after stopping use of Corpitol®.

A 78-year-old woman with history of varicose vein disease treated with Corpitol® sought advice for acute eczematous lesions on the lower legs. The lesions had been treated with systemic antibiotherapy and topic corticoid without improvement.

Patch tests with the Spanish baseline series, leg ulcers series (Chemotechnique®), Corpitol® as is, trans-anethole (5% pet.),

anise alcohol (10% sof), tocopherol (pure) and tocopherol acetate (10% pet.) were performed. Only trans-anethole had a positive reaction (++) D2 and (+++) D4. Corpitol had a doubtful reaction at D4 and D7. Skin lesions healed completely when the patient stopped applying Corpitol®.

In both cases, the aniseed perfume contained in Corpitol® composition was responsible for the allergy to this product. Patch tests with trans-anethole and the different components of Corpitol® were essential in establishing the diagnosis, whereas, reactions to patch tests with Corpitol® (as is) were doubtful or difficult to interpret (Table 1).

Although patch testing with the product as is may be a useful practice, in some instances, it might yield false-negative reactions. In such cases, it is advisable to patch test with the components of the suspected product with an appropriate concentration and in an appropriate vehicle.

Contact allergy and polysensitization is frequent in patients with chronic leg ulcers, especially to perfumes contained in commercial ointments and dressings.¹ Therefore, it seems recommendable to avoid using ointments containing fragrances and other potential contact sensitizers in these particular patients.¹

Anethole is an aromatic organic substance found in the oils of anise, star anise and fennel. Trans-Anethole is the more abundant isomer of anethole, and the one preferred for use. It is used as a flavouring agent in sweet food, toothpastes, liquid medicines and soaps. It is also used in photography and in embedding materials in microscopy.²

A few cases of allergic contact dermatitis to anethole have been reported, most of them are reactions to toothpaste flavours or lipsticks that may cause cheilitis, stomatitis or perioral eczema.³ Occupational contact dermatitis in cooks from anise oil has also been reported.⁴

To the best of our knowledge, these are the first cases described of allergic contact dermatitis to Corpitolinol 60.

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Table 1 Patch test reactions to Corpitol® and its components

Patch tests	Case 1			Case 2		
	D2	D4	D7	D2	D4	D7
Corpitol (as is)	–	–	+	–	?+	?+
Trans-Anethole (5% pet.)	++	++		++	+++	
Anise alcohol (10% sof)	–	–				
Tocopherol acetate (10% pet.)	–	–		–	–	
Tocopherol (pure)	–	–		–	–	

References

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