

Photodermatitis from tetrazepam

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Benzodiazepines cause rare Type IV hypersensitivity reactions (1) that are generally positive on patch testing (2–3). Fixed drug eruption, generalized reactions, contact dermatitis, leucocytoclastic vasculitis, erythema multiforme, photo-onycholysis and photosensitivity (4–8) have also been reported. Cross-reaction between diazepam and tetrazepam has been demonstrated (9).

Case Report

A 35-year-old woman was treated for sciatica with ibuprofen 400 mg oral 3× daily, and diazepam 5 mg oral at night. One night, she also took 50 mg oral tetrazepam because of muscle spasm. The following day, after sun exposure in the morning, she developed an itchy micropapular rash on sun-exposed areas. Treatment was discontinued and the eruption cleared with skin desquamation in 10 days. She needed therapy with systemic antihistamines and corticosteroids.

Patch and photopatch tests were performed (Table 1). Oral photochallenge tests were made with ibuprofen and diazepam separately. She tolerated both drugs without problems. Oral photochallenge test with tetrazepam was performed, with reappearance of the skin eruption.

Table 1. Patch and photopatch test results

	Patch test		Photopatch test	
	D2	D4	D2	D4
diazepam 10% pet.	–	–	–	–
tetrazepam 10% pet.	–	–	–	++
ibuprofen 10% pet.	–	–	–	–

Discussion

This was systemic photosensitivity to a benzodiazepine. In this case, there was no cross-reaction between tetrazepam and diazepam. In previous cases of photosensitivity (5–8), diagnosis has generally been confirmed by oral photochallenge test. In our case, a positive photopatch test was also obtained.

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