

ALLERGIC CONTACT DERMATITIS: CLINICAL FEATURES AND PROFILE OF SENSITIZING ALLERGENS IN RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA

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Abstract

Background. No reports are available on allergic contact dermatitis in Saudi Arabia, although it seems to be a common skin problem. We attempted to explore certain clinical aspects in addition to the profile of sensitizing allergens in our area. As no standard panel for patch testing is available in our geographic region, we examined the suitability of the European Standard Series.

Methods. Patch testing was performed on 271 consecutive patients with various forms of dermatitis, referred for evaluation of possible allergic contact dermatitis. The study included 147 women and 124 men. The patients were between 12 and 75 years of age.

Results. Out of 271 subjects, 152 (56.1%) showed one or more positive reactions. Of these, 80 (52.6%) were women and 72 (47.4%) were men. Almost one quarter of the patients (25.7%) presented with hand dermatitis.

Positive reactions to 21 out of the 22 allergens were found. Sensitization was most common to nickel sulfate (39.5%), potassium dichromate (32.9%), and cobalt chloride (30.9%). Reactions to the other allergens ranged between 14.5% and 1.3%. Less than one percent of the patients (0.66%) reacted to benzocaine and showed no reaction to primin.

Conclusions. Allergic contact dermatitis is a common skin problem in Saudi Arabia. Further studies that address the prevalence and incidence of the disease are indicated. The European Standard Series is suitable for patch testing patients in our community; however, we suggest exclusion of benzocaine and primin. The addition of three allergens of local relevance, black seed oil, local perfume mix, and henna, are presented and discussed. The formulation of a regional standard series for patch testing dermatitis patients in our geographic area requires further collaborative studies.

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