

DRUG ERUPTION DUE TO VITAMIN A

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Summary

A patient having itching and erythema on the palms and soles caused by vitamin A and confirmed by repeated provocation tests is reported.

Allergic reactions to vitamins are unusual, except for vitamin B₁,^{1,2} B₁₂,^{3,5} and folic acid¹. Even these are not very common. Toxic reactions due to over dosage, however, are far more common, particularly with vitamins A and D. Reactions to vitamin A include irritability, loss of appetite, itching, fatigue, severe headache, myalgia, loss of body hair, nystagmus, gingivitis, bone pains, hepato-splenomegaly and scaly skin lesions^{1,6,7}. To the best of our knowledge allergic skin eruptions due to vitamin A have not been reported. We are reporting a case of drug eruption due to vitamin A confirmed by repeated provocation tests.

Case Report

A 25-year-old housewife took 4 tablets of co-trimoxazole, 300 mg oxyphenbutazone and 10 mg diazepam daily for one week ending February 10, 1980 for watery discharge per vagina and pain in the abdomen. The next day, she also took 50,000 units vitamin A, 1 tablet of vitamin B complex and 0.5 mg betamethasone for submucous fibrosis. Four hours later, she developed high grade fever, itching and multiple erythematous macules on the trunk and extremities with swelling of

the face, lips and eye-lids. These symptoms cleared completely in 4 days with 2 mg betamethasone daily, the other drugs having been stopped. After betamethasone had been withdrawn, provocation test was started on February 16, 1980 giving one drug after every 24 hours. There was no reaction following vitamin B complex, diazepam, co-trimoxazole and metronidazole. However, 8 hours after 50,000 units of vitamin A, she developed itching and erythema on the palms and soles which subsided spontaneously during the next 24 hours. On giving 100 mg oxyphenbutazone also, she developed itching all over the body along with erythema on the palms and soles. On repeating the provocation test, she again developed erythema and itching on the palms and soles following vitamin A; but only high grade fever and no eruption following oxyphenbutazone. Occurrence of itching and erythema on the palms and soles following vitamin A was confirmed third time as well.

Discussion

Repeated occurrence of itching and erythema within 3-7 hours following 50,000 units of vitamin A confirms the association of the eruption with vitamin A. For the same reason, it cannot be considered a toxic reaction. Although no laboratory tests have been undertaken to assess the nature of the

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reaction, it seems to be an allergic reaction.

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—Managing Editor