

CONTACT DERMATITIS TO BIDI

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A 29-year-old male developed dermatitis on the adjoining surfaces of the right index and the middle fingers, the site for holding cigarette/*biddi*. Patch test with the tobacco of the *bidi* was positive.

Key words : Contact dermatitis, Bidi.

Bidi is a cheaper version of cigarette, which is widely used in India by poor people. It is made by rolling a dried rectangular piece of temburni (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) leaf into a roughly conical shape, packing it with 0.15 to 0.25 gm of tobacco and securing the roll with a narrow band of thin paper or a thread. We are reporting a case where contact dermatitis developed to the tobacco of *bidi* in a smoker.

Case Report

A 29-year-old male driver developed dermatitis on the medial aspect of the index finger and the corresponding lateral aspect of the middle finger of his right hand for the last 6 months. He was a known *bidi* smoker. He would improve with local corticosteroids, but the lesions would recur on stopping the treatment. Patch tests with the *bidi* leaf, tobacco and the paper wrapped up on the *bidi* leaf show eda positive reaction with tobacco. Tests with the leaf and the paper were negative. He

stopped smoking for about 2-3 weeks and the lesions healed with corticosteroid cream in a week's time. He remained free of the lesions till he again started smoking.

Comments

Contact dermatitis in smoker's due to menthol in mentholated cigarettes has been reported¹ but contact hypersensitivity to tobacco appears to be unknown. The constituents of cigarette smoke such as hydrocyanic acid, acetaldehyde, acrolein, ammonia, formaldehyde and oxides of nitrogen are known irritants to mucous membranes.² However, their effect on the skin is not known except the formaldehyde which is a known skin sensitiser.

References

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2. Holbrook JH : Tobacco smoking, in : *Principles of Internal Medicine*, Tenth Ed, Editors, Petersdorf RG, Adams RD, Braunwald E et al : McGraw Hill International Book Company, New York, 1983; p 1302.

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