

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE, ATOPY AND CONTACT SENSITIVITY IN NUMMULAR DERMATITIS

To the Editor

Nummular dermatitis, classified as an endogenous eczema presents with coin- shaped lesions usually on the extremities. ACD to chromates can present with nummular lesions .

A 24 year - old man had history of relapsing dermatitis over the legs since 3 years of age and nummular lesions over arms and trunk of 9 years duration. The latter exacerbated in winter with remission in summer. He had used many topical medications on and off. The patient was a resident of Bangalore which is a dry place with low humidity. The lesions had completely remitted for 2 years while he had stayed in a coastal place, possibly the high humidity being beneficial. He was employed in a bakery, involved in packing items. There was family history of atopy, father being an asthmatic.

Patch testing with standard series showed positive reactions to neomycin and fragrance mix. Cosmetic and preservative series showed negative results. In the bakery series cinnamic alcohol (fragrance) and dodecyl galate (anti - oxidant in food and cosmetics) gave positive reactions.

We stress the importance of a detailed history and patch testing in the evaluation of nummular dermatitis.

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Reference

1. Fisher AA. Chromate dermatitis and cement burns. In : Fisher AA. (ed), Contact Dermatitis . Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia 1986 : 763.

SKIN DISEASES IN THE ELDERLY

To the Editor

A glance at the statistics show that advanced medical science has contributed to an increase in the average life span. In India in 1992, 6.6% people were above 60 years which by year 2001 is expected to rise to 8.3% With increase in average life span and adoption of small family norms the problems of elderly in terms of economic independence, nutrition and health are multifactorial and several studies have determined the prevalence of dermatological diseases in elderly population.^{1,2}

We have also conducted such a study over 214 patients between the age group 60-85 years attending

Skin & VD OPD during Jan 1996 to Dec. 1996 at G.M.C Patiala (Punjab). All patients were assessed on a prescribed proforma. Dermatological, systemic and routine investigations were done in all cases. Histopathological examination was done in relevant cases.

Reported prevalence was out of 214 patients, 126 (56%) male and 88 (42%) females, male to female ratio of 1.33: 1. 114 (51%) patients belonged to rural background and 100 (49%) to urban background. Personal hygiene was poor in 113 (49%) mostly rural cases and satisfactory in 56 (27%) and good in 45 (24%) mostly