Session Number/ Title: U020: Head to Toes: Region-specific Contact Dermatitis Society

Presenter: Katherine K. Brown, MD
University of Pennsylvania- Department of Dermatology

Trunk and Upper Extremities

• Differential
  – Atopic Dermatitis
  – Nummular Eczema
  – Allergic Contact Dermatitis (ACD)
  – Dermal Hypersensitivity
  – Dermatographism
• Increased Suspicion of ACD if:
  – Epidermal >Dermal exam findings
  – Discrete defined patches or plaques > 3 cm
  – Upper back or waist predominant

• Upper Back and Flank Dermatitis Potential allergens
  – Textiles-
    • Formaldehyde resins
    • Dyes (disperse blue 106)
    • Detergents- irritants >> allergens like methylisothiazolinone (MI), fragrance in softener
  – Bedding- wrinkle free sheets, pillow, mattress
    • Foam rubber
    • p-tert-butylphenol formaldehyde resin
  – Medicaments- may be diffuse
    • topical steroids, propylene glycol (PG)
  – Furniture- back, posterior thighs

• Neck
  – highly reactive to irritants and allergens
  – Increased Suspicion of ACD if: lateral neck involved, no history of atopy
  – Allergens
    • Hair care products –MI, p-phenylenediamine (PPD)
    • Nickel- long earrings, necklaces, zippers
    • Perfume
    • Nail care- toluene-sulfonamide formaldehyde resin, benzophenone
    • Cosmetics / rinse-off cleansers
    • Topical acne medications- benzoyl peroxid3

• Chest-
  – Allergens
    • Metal- jewelry, clothing decor
    • Cologne/Perfume
    • Rubber- exercise clothing, leotards

• Breast and Nipples
  – Differential
    • Atopic Dermatitis


• Nipple ACD- usually bilateral (78%) and involves periareolar skin (89%)
  • Lactation: lanolin, chamomile, beeswax
  • Bra: p-tert-butylphenol formaldehyde resin
  • Medical tattoo colorants
  • Irritant Contact Dermatitis (ICD): severe to concentrated high efficiency detergent

• Axilla
  – Differential
    • Inverse Psoriasis
    • Irritant Contact Dermatitis (ICD)
    • Erythrasma
    • Symmetric drug-related intertriginous and flexural exanthem (SDRIFE)/"Baboon" syndrome
  – Increased Suspicion of ACD if:
    • Moderate–severe itch
    • Ill-defined patches/plaques
  – Allergens
    • Perfume
    • Shaving products
    • Deodorant/antiperspirants- fragrance/lyral/MI/aluminum
    • Textiles- periaxillary, usually spares vault

• Waist/umbilicus
  – Allergens
    • Rubber
    • Nickel-umbilicus
    • Textile resins
    • Methylisothiazolinone- contact gel on a waist reduction belt

• Arms
  – Gloves (rubber accelerators)
    • 60% of relevant patch test reactions in food service workers were thiuram and carba mix
  – Watch/bracelets
  – Plants
  – Textile dyes
  – Chemical splash/spray

• Hands
  – Differential
    • Dyshidrotic eczema
    • Psoriasis
    • Irritant Contact Dermatitis >> Allergic Contact Dermatitis
    • Scabies
  – Increased Suspicion of ACD if:
    • Presence of nail fold involvement
    • Absence of webspace involvement
    • Rubber glove use- either at home or occupationally
  – Exposures
    • Occupational-hair stylists, healthcare workers, childcare workers, food service workers.
    • Frictional dermatitis- paper/cardboard/textiles
• Tech gadgets
  − Allergens
    • Metal: Nickel, cobalt, chromium
    • Rubber
    • PPD
    • Topical Preservatives
    • Fragrance

Final Points
• Textile allergy to dye (acute and dramatic) vs. formaldehyde (chronic and smoldering)
• Consider drug reaction (SDRIFE) in PT negative patients with intertriginous distribution
• Consider patch testing for purely erythematous patches with minimal epidermal change at waist and intertriginous areas.

References: