

Short Communication

Parthenium dermatitis presenting as subacute prurigo

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Subacute prurigo is a pruritic, papular skin condition. Clinically, it resembles nodular prurigo except that the lesions are smaller and less elevated.¹ Utility of patch test in prurigo has been described previously.^{2,3} Since subacute prurigo is eczematous in nature, patch test may be useful in the diagnosis of subacute prurigo.

Case 1

A 45-year-old rice mill owner presented with itchy skin lesions over the upper extremities of 6 month duration. There was no history of photosensitivity or atopy. Cutaneous examination revealed multiple erythematous and hyperpigmented excoriated papules on the arms and forearms. Patch test was done with Indian standard series (ISS) and parthenium 1 and 3% revealed strong reaction (++) to parthenium at 48 and 72 hours.

Case 2

A 40-year-old house wife presented with itchy skin lesions on the trunk and extremities of 1 year duration. There was no evidence of atopic diathesis or history of

insect bite allergy. Examination revealed multiple hyperpigmented and excoriated papules on the mid and lower back, extensor aspect of the upper and lower extremities. Patch test with ISS and parthenium 1 and 3% revealed strong reaction (++) to parthenium at 48 and 72 hours.

Discussion

Parthenium dermatitis is the major cause of allergic contact dermatitis due to plants in India. Various clinical patterns of parthenium dermatitis have been described in the literature; commonest being airborne contact dermatitis (ABCD).⁴ Sharma *et al.*⁵ reported prurigo-nodularis-like presentation of parthenium dermatitis. Our patients presented with features of subacute prurigo and exhibited strong contact allergy to parthenium. Both of them hailed from parthenium endemic region of the state and acknowledged the exposure to parthenium. Subacute prurigo may be a new entity in the clinical spectrum of parthenium dermatitis; this necessitates the need for patch testing in patients with subacute prurigo.

Reference

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