



CONTACT DERMATITIS AND OCCUPATIONAL DERMATOSES

CONTACT DERMATITIS INDUCED BY SEA-WATER: REPORT OF FOUR CASES

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Background: There are reports regarding to aquagenic urticaria or seabather's eruption after contact with seawater, however, the contact dermatitis caused by sea-water is rarely reported.

Observation: Four foreign patients aged in their 30s presented with chronic dermatitis on their hands and arms for several months. The skin lesions were lichenified erythematous patches with sensation of severe itch which were chronic eczema. They worked as a fisherman working at south and west coast. They were all from Sri Lanka and had never been exposed to sea-water before. The skin lesions aggravated in weekdays and improved in weekends. One patient had to quit his job due to severe itching. After quitting his job, the skin recovered without any treatment. The patch test was performed in all four patients. All the patients showed strong positive reactions to sea-water and several contactants. The positive contactants differ from individual. We also analyzed the sea-water from one patient's workplace. The result showed nonspecific findings.

Key message: The exact cause of this contact dermatitis is not clear. However, we hypothesized that hypertonicity of seawater and microelement such as metals or other protein allergens might produce the skin reaction. Further studies must be needed to find out the pathomechanism of this condition.

