



CONTACT DERMATITIS AND OCCUPATIONAL DERMATOSES

OCCUPATIONAL DERMATITIS IN FIELD WORKERS

Kaushal Verma⁽¹⁾

All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Dermatology and Venereology, New Delhi, India⁽¹⁾

Occupational skin diseases in field workers are common throughout the world. Field workers are exposed to different environmental and occupational allergens, though the nature of allergens may vary from region to region. A large majority of people in India are occupationally engaged in agriculture and construction work. Occupational dermatitis is common in them which is mainly caused by plant allergens, construction material and occasionally some other allergens like insecticides/pesticides etc. Parthenium dermatitis is the most common occupational dermatitis in field workers in India. Parthenium is a weed of compositae family which got introduced in India through imported food grains from United States. It is one of the world's seven most devastating and hazardous weeds. Farmers, labourers, agriculturists and other workers who work in fields / outdoor are primarily affected by this weed. It generally causes air-borne contact dermatitis and the dermatitis caused by parthenium usually involves the exposed areas of body, clinically manifesting as itchy erythematous inflamed lesions. Occasionally it can present as chronic actinic dermatitis, photosensitive lichenoid eruption, seborrhoeic dermatitis, atopic dermatitis and erythroderma. Insecticide/ pesticide sprays have also been shown to cause air borne dermatitis in farmers, labourers and field workers engaged in agriculture, horticulture and floriculture. A similar dermatitis with itchy lichenoid and eczematoid lesions on exposed areas can occur due to cement in construction workers. The presence of high concentrations of chromium in majority of the cement samples in India may be responsible for this! Proper diagnostic facilities and medical care as well as strict regulations and workplace preventive measures are needed for prevention and management of occupational dermatitis in these workers.

