Wood contact dermatitis is a rare condition, but it is frequently reported in occupational contexts, especially in association with tropical woods [1]. Sensitization in such cases is related to direct or airborne exposure to wood dust [1]. There have been only rare reports of sensitization to solid wood and finished wood products such as instruments, wooden jewelry, and knife handles [1].

We report the case of a 38-year-old woman, blind since the age of 15 years due to retinal detachment, who developed contact dermatitis after exposure to wood. In the previous 14 months, she had been diagnosed with incomplete remission of skin lesions. Allergic persistent rhinitis to oak (Quercus robur, Fagus sylvatica) resulted in dreadful itching and a progressive loss of sensitivity to wood in our patient, with results showing sensitization to 1 exotic wood (G balsamiferum) and 2 nonexotic woods (F sylvatica and Q robur) through exposure to finished articles.

Complete avoidance of the objects made with the woods to which our patient was sensitized resulted in the remission of skin lesions. The specific diagnosis was essential in this particular case as it allowed us to propose specific measures to help the patient, who was blind, to recover her ability to read braille and therefore regain quality of life.

References


Manuscript received May 11, 2010; accepted for publication, September 7, 2010.

Daniel Machado
Apartado 9057
3001-301 Coimbra
Portugal
E-mail: danielmachadooliveira@gmail.com