Fixed Drug Eruption with Lormetazepam (Noctamid)

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To the Editor

A case of fixed drug eruption with lormetazepam, a benzodiazepine derivative, is described. As far as we are aware, apart from chlordiazepoxide, this is the first published report with another benzodiazepine compound.

Case Report. A 30-year-old pharmaceutical company executive complained of two reddish-brown patches on shaft of penis and glans with mild itching and burning. On enquiry he admitted to taking Noctamid (lormetazepam) for insomnia the night before. There was no history of his taking any other drug for the last month, nor was there any evidence of atopy or previous drug eruption. There was also no history of concomitant or previous systemic illness. He was prescribed betamethasone valerate ointment locally and antazoline tablets thrice daily.

After the lesions had settled, he was challenged with 1 tablet of Noctamid orally. About 2 h later a burning sensation appeared in the previous lesions. These became erythematous and tender within the next 2 h. This proved that the eruption was due to lormetazepam.

Discussion. Fixed drug eruption is a specific type of reaction, which occurs at the same anatomic sites following re-exposure to the same or chemically related drugs. Sulphonamides, tetracyclines, barbiturates, phenazones and pyrazolone derivatives are the common agents responsible for this type of eruption [1].

Our case deserves reporting because of its remarkable rarity. Benzodiazepines are nowadays widely used and are regarded as relatively safe drugs. Despite their widespread usage, cutaneous side effects are uncommon [2, 3]. A review of the recent literature [4–9] and major dermatological reference textbooks [10–12] show not a single instance of fixed drug eruption in any of the members of the benzodiazepine family except chlordiazepoxide [13]. It is true that fixed drug eruptions have been reported with other hypnotics and sedatives, but not with benzodiazepines.

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