Under pressure

Angela De Cunto · Irene Berti · Marta Minute ·
Giorgio Longo

Received: 1 August 2012 / Accepted: 30 August 2012 / Published online: 12 September 2012
© Springer-Verlag 2012

Abstract Physical urticaria is a rare but challenging subset of chronic urticaria. Wheals of pressure urticaria are typically delayed in appearance. A pressure test can easily be done to confirm the diagnosis.

Keywords Chronic urticaria · Pressure urticaria · Delayed dermographism · Pressure test

A 12-year-old male presented with a 2-month history of urticaria. The patient reported a developing of localized large wheals as a reaction to a sustained pressure stimulus (as wearing a belt or carrying a bag). Wheals appeared 2 h after the stimulus and lasted for more than 12–24 h. A delayed dermographic reaction was also elicited. A pressure test was performed and confirmed the diagnosis of delayed pressure urticaria by hanging a 7 kg tool bag over the patient's shoulder (Fig. 1). Antihistamine treatment was started with a complete and persistent resolution of symptoms at 1 year follow up.

Physical urticaria is a subset of chronic urticaria characterized by whealing in response to a specific physical

Fig. 1 Delayed pressure urticaria: a large wheal appeared over the patient's shoulder 45 min after placing a 7-kg tool bag

stimulus [1, 2]. In delayed pressure urticaria, the swelling that follows a pressure stimulus is delayed in appearance and can take up more than 24 h to disappear [2]. Delayed dermographism is also a typical feature of pressure urticaria [1]. The diagnosis can be confirmed with a pressure test: hanging a 7-kg weight over the shoulder for 15 min is one of the proposed methods [3]. Antihistamine treatment is reported as efficacious in most cases of chronic urticaria, until a spontaneous resolution occurs [1].

References

1. Dice JP (2004) Physical urticaria. *Immunol Allergy Clin North Am* 24(2):225–246
2. Lawlor F, Black AK (2004) Delayed pressure urticaria. *Immunol Allergy Clin North Am* 24(2):247–258
3. Ryan TJ, Shim-Young N, Turk JL (1968) Delayed pressure urticaria. *Br J Dermatol* 80(8):485–490

A. De Cunto (✉) · I. Berti · M. Minute · G. Longo
Institute for Maternal and Child Health–IRCCS “Burlo Garofolo”,
University of Trieste,
Via dell’Istria 67/1,
34100 Trieste, Italy
e-mail: angeladcent@gmail.com

I. Berti
e-mail: berti@burlo.trieste.it

M. Minute
e-mail: martaminute@gmail.com

G. Longo
e-mail: longog@burlo.trieste.it