

# Autoimmune chronic urticaria: transferability of autologous serum skin test

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**Abstract** At least 30 % of children with chronic urticaria have an autoimmune aetiology with a positive autologous serum skin test (ASST). ASST is cheap, easy to perform and has good sensibility and specificity in detecting autoantibodies. In case of concern about reliability of ASST because of antihistamine medications, test transferability seems to be feasible.

**Keywords** Chronic urticaria · Autoimmune urticaria · ASST · Antihistamine

A 13-year-old female presented with a 4-month history of worsening urticaria frequently associated with angioedema and hardly controlled by high doses of antihistamine (10 mg daily). Urticaria did not seem to be triggered by physical stimuli.

Specific IgE against common foods and aeroallergens were negative; full blood count, C3 and C4 complement fractions, ESR and thyroid function were normal. Main autoantibodies were absent. Since every attempt to slow down the antihistamine dosage had led to immediate and severe urticaria/angioedema relapse, we decided to perform an intradermal injection of the patient's serum also in her own mother. After 15 min, a little weal appeared on the patient's forearm, and a large weal appeared on her mother (Fig. 1). We diagnosed chronic autoimmune urticaria (CAU).

Overall, 0.1–3 % of children are diagnosed with chronic urticaria (CU) [2]. In nearly 30 % of patients with CU, active autoantibodies against IgE or its receptor have been



**Fig. 1** Autologous serum skin test: a little weal (diameter, 10 mm) appeared on the patient's forearm, and a large weal (diameter, 18 mm) appeared on her mother's forearm 15 min after intradermal injection of the patient's own serum

identified [2, 3]. The autologous serum skin test is an *in vivo* clinical test which has been suggested as a screening tool for CAU [2, 3]. Interestingly, despite full antihistamine therapy, the patient test resulted positive, although much less pronounced. This incomplete test inhibition by antihistamine therapy has already been reported in the literature [1].

**Conflict of interest** None to declare.

## References

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