Introduction

Many different naturopathic medications can cause chemical burns. Among these naturopathic medicines, one of the most frequent causes of burns is crushed garlic. Burns caused by garlic were first described in the English literature in 1987.1 Garlic burns have subsequently been reported many times on different parts of the body and at different depths.2-8 In this case report, we present the treatment of a second degree skin burn at the knee region that was caused by the use of crushed garlic over a short time period.

Case Report

A 70-year-old male patient was referred to our burn center with a second degree burn in the right knee region (Fig. 1). He had used crushed garlic three days earlier, wrapping it around his knee to treat knee ache. The patient had first wrapped gauze around his skin then put the crushed garlic on it and wrapped the garlic using more gauze. This was the first time that he had used garlic treat-
Gras Dressings). The patient’s follow-up included dressing changes once every two days. Ten days after this nonsurgical treatment, the wound had totally healed.

Discussion

In recent years, western countries have seen an increase in the use of naturopathic medicines, resulting from the greater interaction with and influence of eastern cultures. Creams and pastes are the preferred forms of naturopathic treatments – one of which is ‘crushed garlic’. Garlic has been used for centuries to relieve localized pains in several parts of the body. It has also been used in many other areas of medicine. However, some systemic and local adverse effects can be seen as a result of garlic treatment. One of the most commonly reported side effects of applying garlic is burns. Indeed, it is known that garlic can cause serious chemical burns. Some chemicals, such as diallylsulfide, allicin, and allylpropyldisulfide, have been thought to cause skin burns from raw garlic treatments. Coagulation necrosis occurs with exposure to these chemicals.

Previous studies reported the exposure times to be not less than two hours. In our case, the burn occurred in a very short time period of less than one hour. Severe injuries may occur rapidly as a result of skin sensitivity to the chemicals in garlic, depending on its freshness, concentration, the anatomic area and previous skin disease.

It should be kept in mind that naturopathies such as garlic may cause systemic or local adverse reactions, even with short contact duration.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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