

# CONTACT ALLERGY AND "ATOPY PATCH TESTS" IN ATOPIC DERMATITIS

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## ABSTRACT

The prevalence of contact sensitization in atopic dermatitis (AD) patients varies considerably, in dependence of sex, age, occupation, the population tested, i.e. patients with a long history of the disease, the allergens used and the country. Because of the highly irritable atopic skin unspecific irritant reactions were seen in 24 % to 40 % of the AD patients. The chemicals most frequently involved in contact sensitization are nickel sulfate, potassium dichromate, cobalt chloride, neomycine and benzoyl peroxide.

The prevalence of atopic patch tests with aeroallergens (housedust mites, pollens, animal danders and moulds) also vary from few to 70 % of the various tested allergens and the different authors. These findings support the hypothesis that direct epidermal contact with aeroallergens may play a pathogenetic role in some patients with AD.

Positive atopic patch tests to aeroallergens are not only present in patients with AD and positive specific prick tests or serum IgE (RAST) but they can also occur in presence of negative prick test reactions or negative specific IgE levels. International recommendations for standardization and evaluation of atopy patch tests are urgently needed.

## KEY WORDS

atopic dermatitis, contact allergy, atopy patch tests, aeroallergens

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## PREVALENCE OF CONTACT ALLERGY

Reports on the prevalence rate of contact sensitization in atopic dermatitis (AD) patients are contradictory. The

International Contact Dermatitis Research Group (ICDRG) demonstrated that the incidence of contact allergy is similar in atopic, seborrheic and nummular eczema (2). However,

