

Editorial

Allergy to Nickel: Yes – but how does it get into the skin?

Especially among women in industrialized parts of the world, nickel allergy is the leading cause of allergic contact dermatitis and epidemiology suggests that nickel allergy is steadily increasing in prevalence in many countries. Yet over the last decades numerous attempts have been made worldwide to reduce the risk of sensitization, e.g. by removing nickel from coins, from needles used to pierce the skin, from bracelets, etc, and by information campaigns about how to avoid getting in contact with nickel.

Against this somewhat frustrating background it is clearly important not only to know as much as possible about the sensitization process, but also to study the way in which nickel enters the skin, i.e. via permeation from the skin surface through the horny layer (*stratum corneum*). In intact skin, transcorneal penetration is usually a prerequisite for nickel's subsequent contact with epidermal cells, e.g. keratinocytes, lymphocytes and Langerhans' cells, leading to sensitization or provocation of pre-existing allergy.

In this supplement of *Acta Dermato-Venereologica*, a distinguished group of scientists from USA, Italy and Japan, headed by Dr Jurij Hostynek and Prof. Howard Maibach of the UCSF School of Medicine, San Francisco, present their in-depth studies of various aspects of human stratum corneum penetration of nickel in vivo and in vitro. Since this series of closely related and rather voluminous papers were submitted to *Acta D-V* almost simultaneously, the editorial board suggested to the authors that their papers should be considered for publication as a supplement. By combining the articles and allowing them to remain quite elaborate we believe that the present supplement of *Acta D-V* provides the most detailed and updated source of information available today about nickel penetration through human skin. It also gives an excellent overview and the state of the art of this important matter. Needless-to-say, all papers have been peer-reviewed by some of the most experienced experts in their field of nickel allergy and transepidermal penetration, for which I am very grateful.

Anders Vahlquist
Editor-in-Chief