Anaphylaxis Due to Senna (Cassia angustifolia)

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Abstract

Senna (Cassia angustifolia) is a scrub plant belonging to the Fabaceae family that is widely used as a medicinal plant owing to its laxative effects, which are associated with sennosides. In addition, because it contains anthraquinones, it is also used as a coloring agent in hair dyes [1]. Senna is a frequent component of herbal teas marketed for weight loss.

We report the case of a 19-year-old man who presented with rhinoconjunctivitis, dyspnea, disfiguring facial edema, and disseminated hives 10 minutes after eating rice with clams, fried eggs, lettuce, and yoghurt, followed by an infusion (Delgaxan Plus, Pompadour Ibérica) containing artichoke, horsetail, peppermint, and senna. No other drugs or cofactors were associated with the episode. The patient recovered promptly with intramuscular epinephrine and intravenous methylprednisolone and dexchlorpheniramine.

The allergology work-up consisted of the following: (1) Skin prick tests with all the foods involved, common inhalant allergens, and vegetal pan-allergens such as natural profilin/Pho d 2 and peach LTP/Pru p 3, as well as natural latex and Anisakis extracts; (2) Skin tests (prick-prick) with Delgaxan infusion and its separate components (artichoke, horsetail, mint, and Cassia leaves); (3) complete blood count, biochemistry, tryptase, total and specific IgE, and C3-C4; (4) oral challenge tests with the food ingested and the components of the infusion; (5) SDS-PAGE immunoblotting with extracts from Cassia leaf and the Delgaxan infusion. Informed consent was obtained from the patient for all in vitro and in vivo tests.

The skin test results were positive for Delgaxan and senna leaf extracts in the patient and negative in 22 controls (healthy or atopic). Skin tests were negative to artichoke, horsetail, and peppermint, as well as to egg and milk proteins, rice, clam, mussel, shrimp, codfish, Anisakis, lettuce, wheat, corn, lentil, peanut, walnut, soy, peach, kiwi, latex, and native profilin and LTP extracts. Prick tests with inhalant allergens were positive to Dermatophagoides species and negative to storage mites, molds, cat and dog dander, and a variety of pollens, including Fagales. The patient subsequently tolerated ingestion of rice, clams, egg, and dairy products, as well as artichoke, horsetail, and peppermint.
Cassia siamea IgE-binding bands of 66, 23, and 16.5 kDa in the leaves [1,4] and powder extracts [1], mainly in the Cassia bands were detected by SDS-PAGE immunoblotting with tolerance is unknown. In 2 of these reports, several IgE-binding of laxative senna infusions [5], while in others, eventual oral industry [1,3-5]. In one such case, the patients tolerated intake of occupational allergy (asthma and rhinoconjunctivitis) not provide specific associated references. Isolated cases hypersensitivity reactions (pruritus, urticaria) but does not provide specific associated references. Isolated cases of occupational allergy (asthma and rhinoconjunctivitis) have been reported in workers in the phytopharmaceutical industry [1,3-5]. In one such case, the patients tolerated intake of laxative senna infusions and laxatives [4]. Sensitization via inhalation or ingestion might occur through different proteins. In addition, as is the case with cereal flours, the same protein might cause allergy by inhalation in a person who tolerates ingestion, and vice versa, eg, the wheat LTP Tri a 19 in baker’s asthma and in some patients with food allergy to wheat.

One of the objectives of this case is to highlight the growing consumption of apparently harmless natural herbs and dietary supplements in the context of complementary medicine [7]. Despite the documented frequency of toxic or immunologic reactions and drug interactions [8], these products are often forgotten in the clinical history, even by allergists [9]. As usual, appropriate history taking can lead to a more accurate diagnosis and prevent future anaphylactic reactions.

**Funding**

The authors declare that no funding was received for the present study.

**Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.
References


Manuscript received May 21, 2020; accepted for publication May 28, 2020.

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