Sofa Dermatitis Outbreak

I would like to inform you about an outbreak of sofa dermatitis. I have so far collected 50 cases. A similar outbreak has been reported by the Finish Dermatological Society and they have over 70 cases. All sofas have been traced to the same huge factory in the Far East.

The connection between the rash and the sofa(suite) is not always apparent. Most patients report the onset of their dermatitis 8-12 weeks after purchasing the new sofa(suite). Many have presented with a very florid eczematous eruption via A&E departments. Of my 8 patients, a few had odd presentations and the cause of their dermatosis was only appreciated when the problem became apparent. Several patients were hospitalised and required oral steroids. The rash often leaves a lichenoid eruption that persists for months. Patch testing has been negative in many cases.

This lady bought a recliner chair and would usually lie on her left side!

Most sofas are from Argos (Bari & Pia Suite) or Walmsleys (Marco Suite). Argos has taken my concerns seriously and taken the two models in question of the market. However, they have sold over 8,000 suites to date.

I am in communication with Dr Susitaval, President of the Finnish Dermatological Society. They have involved a toxicologist and material analyses are ongoing. Argos are also investigating the matter and first indications suggest a fungicide causing the allergic reaction. I will circulate more information as soon as it becomes available.
Trading Standards have also been involved. I would suggest you advise your patients to contact Consumer Direct on 08454 040506 for advice. Tell the patients to tell Consumer Direct that they have been advised that their report needs to be referred on to Trading Standards for whom Consumer Direct are the first point of contact. The more that complain to them the more data we will have recorded.

Could you kindly let me know if you have cases yourself. I would be interested to know where they purchased their sofa/suite, make/model, colour, and if they used any cleaning products on the sofa/suite.

Kind regards

Sandra Winhoven

Dr Sandra Winhoven
Consultant Dermatologist
Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road
Prescot
Merseyside
L35 5DR

Tel 0151 4301962
Fax 0151 4301869
Email sandra.winhoven@sthk.nhs.uk
     swinhoven@hotmail.com