due to strong sensitizers (especially drugs but also occupational allergens) (3–5). To our knowledge, there has never been described an erythema multiforme with contact dermatitis from rubber vulcanization agents.

The lesions were the consequence of indirect occupational contact with rubber piping via the intermediary of a detachment gel able to absorb and concentrate rubber allergens. The clinical course of the disease was biphasic: initially, an acute eczema with poor response to topical corticosteroids and then erythema multiforme requiring systemic corticosteroids. The pathophysiological mechanism could be a systemic response due to the strength of the allergen or cytotoxicity as in erythema multiforme with herpetic infection (4, 5).

We were amazed by the rapidity of this sensitization to rubber vulcanization agents. An occupational survey found other workers presenting with a similar eruption at the same factory.

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A multilingual European patch test software concept: WinAlldat/ESSCA

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The ready availability of a computer database for standardized patch test data has great scientific and public health benefits (1). The patch test software 'WinAlldat/ESSCA' has been developed as a tool to (i) collect and analyse patch test data on a local level and (ii) export this (anonymized) data to a data centre for further pooled analyses. Commissioned by the EU project ESSCA-DC (QLK4-CT-2001-00343), WinAlldat/ESSCA has successfully been used since early 2002 to collect data in the context of the European Surveillance System on Contact Allergies (ESSCA) (www.essca-dc.org). In addition to its ability to cater for special local research interests and documentation requirements, multilingual capabilities make WinAlldat/ESSCA a candidate software for individual departments or national contact dermatitis groups in search of a suitable tool, with or without the intention to (yet) contribute to ESSCA. We invite colleagues to evaluate WinAlldat/ESSCA, clearly with the hope that they might wish to contribute to, and thus broaden the base of, ESSCA at some stage. Naturally, contributions to ESSCA are more easily incorporated when delivered in a standard format, such as that provided by the WinAlldat/ESSCA software.

The scope of anamnestic items is shown in the history sheet [case record form (CRF)] available online under http://www.ivdk.gwdg.de/essca/doc/. In addition to these core and optional items, local users can easily supplement the basic CRF with additional questions and corresponding pick lists. Additionally, if non-categorical data is to be recorded, respective database extensions and input and report modules can be programmed, e.g. using Visual Basic (Visual Studio™, Microsoft Corp., Redmond, WA, USA). This, however, may require the involvement of information technicians or programmers. Concerning occupations, the ISCO-88 COM classification is used for the sake of compatibility with European statistical requirements. The International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision (ICD-10) has not been included in the core version, because relevant diagnoses are not well represented in this catalogue. Moreover, the ICD-10 classifies dermatitis diagnoses according to selected causative substances, which is redundant to other parts of the WinAlldat/ESSCA database. However, it is possible to supplement the database with a set of ICD-10 diagnoses, if required. The objective of future software development will be to include the support of the XML standard for printing purposes (HTML), export and the integration into hospital information systems. Furthermore, the development of a Java-based WinAlldat/ESSCA client for information retrieval and standard reports tool is being considered.

Translations into languages other than English (core version) can be performed utilizing a translation tool kit, which requires MS Access™ (Microsoft Corp., Redmond, WA, USA). This process involves catalogue lists (e.g. diagnoses, anatomical sites, occupations, allergen names) of the database, screen field labels, online help texts and a written manual. Clearly, a translation needs to be done by just one centre, and translated versions can subsequently be delivered to other centres interested in a particular language version, once the translation has been integrated into the installation package. So far, translations and respective program versions for Italian, French and Polish are currently in the final testing phase. For German-speaking areas, the sister-version of the software, WinAlldat/

IVDK, is available (www.ivdk.org) which is fully compatible with ESSCA standards.

Concerning hardware, Intel-based personal computers with Pentium or AMD CPU (clock speed >800 MHz), 128 MB RAM minimum (recommended: 256/512 MB), hard disk drive with at least 2 GB available free space, floppy disk drive 3.5′ (1.44 MB) and a CD-ROM drive (recommended: 24× speed) is required. A Windows™ 98, Windows NT 4.0, Windows 2000 or Windows XP operating system is also required. Additionally, the database system MS Access 97/Office™ 97 or 2000 is required to execute custom reports and additional program features based on MS Access. While single computer installations are easily done following the stepwise instructions contained in the installation package, any network installation do require more support at a local level, and need to be done in close co-operation with the local IT department.

For contact and further enquiries, please consult the project co-ordinators or the data centre north (covering central and northern Europe) or south (covering French speaking and Mediterranean countries) via the ESSCA website (www.essca-dc.org).

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