

La berilliosi in Italia: una caso di “sarcoidosi” sotto la soglia di esposizione⁽¹⁾

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KEY WORDS

Berylliosis; sarcoidosis; beryllium occupational exposure; lymphocyte proliferation test

SUMMARY

«Berylliosis in Italy: a case of “sarcoidosis” under the Threshold Limit Value». **Background:** *Berylliosis is caused by a chronic immune reaction to beryllium; in Italy the first case of beryllium exposure-related disease was described in 1935 by Fabroni–Marradi and two additional cases of beryllium disease were subsequently described by Ambrosi and co-workers in 1968. No case has since been recognized using the standardized criteria including immunological testing.* **Objectives:** *To describe a case report of clinically significant berylliosis that occurred in a man exposed to beryllium for ten years in the workplace at concentrations below the permitted threshold limit value.* **Methods:** *The man complained of dyspnoea, dry cough, weakness and weight loss for the past year and was at first diagnosed as suffering from sarcoidosis because of increased angiotensin converting enzyme levels, alteration of hepatic and renal functional indexes, the presence of diffused reticulo-nodular lung abnormalities with high resolution computed tomography that also showed enlarged mediastinal lymph nodes, abnormal lung physiology with reduced diffusion capacity and a bronchial biopsy showing granulomatous lesions. Because of the occupational history immunological testing and high resolution HLA class II typing were performed.* **Results:** *The high response to beryllium in the lymphocytes proliferation test and the HLA typing which revealed the presence of the two susceptibility markers HLA-DP_{Glu69} and HLA-DR_{Phe47} led to a diagnosis of berylliosis.* **Conclusions:** *The importance is stressed of suspecting a diagnosis of berylliosis in the proper occupational contexts and encouraging the use of immunological tests for diagnosis, and also the need for critical revision of the permitted threshold limit values.*