**Phytophotodermatitis - Celery Burns and Backpackers.**

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**Abstract**

***Objective:***This paper aimed to identify the cause of a phytophotodermatitis outbreak in a South East Queensland farming region, and to examine the factors that contributed to this outbreak.

***Methods:*** A clinical examination was done on 5 patients and cutaneous punch biopsies were taken from an exposed patient for histological confirmation of phytophotodermatitis. Celery samples were analysed using mass spectrometry to identify the chemical irritant. A site visit to assess the farm was undertaken.

***Results:*** Mass spectrometry confirmed the chemicals, bergapten and pimpinellin as the irritants present in the celery collected. Both chemicals are known photosensitizers and it is hypothesized that they are responsible for photosensitization of the skin, leading to development of ulceration and bullae in the pickers after the juice touched the exposed skin. Histological analysis was suggestive of a diagnosis of phytophotodermatitis. Occupational factors that may have contributed to this outbreak included inappropriate PPE, lack of knowledge in the “backpacker” workforce, and inadequate training.

***Conclusions:*** This study highlights a rare but important cause of vesiculobullous lesions that should be considered for patients working in the agricultural industry and exposed to photosensitizing plants. The lack of knowledge about the pathological mechanism of this disease and the risks associated with a temporary workforce in the agricultural sector, (backpackers) and the difficulty to feedback this information and implement appropriate risk management strategies, and other challenges are discussed.