BACKGROUND: A type-IV-allergic reaction to German camomile (Matricaria chamomilla) in a form of allergic contact dermatitis is not unusual. However, only a few cases of anaphylactic reaction to camomile have been described in the literature.

CASE SUMMARY: We present the case of a 38-year-old Caucasian man who developed an episode of severe anaphylaxis with generalized urticaria, angioedema and severe dyspnoea one hour after consuming camomile tea. Laboratory examination demonstrated a total serum IgE of 123 kU/l with specific IgE against camomile (4.94 kU/l, class 3). Skin prick test and labial provocation test with camomile showed a strong positive reaction.

DISCUSSION: Our case confirms the presence of a type-I allergy to orally ingested camomile and indicates that the incidence and risk may be underestimated. Additional response to mugwort and pollen-derived food allergens should be evaluated in patients sensitised to camomile due to a higher incidence of allergic cross-reactivity.
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