Curiositas

MEDICAL STUDENT QUIZ

A 64 year old man presented to his general practitioner with a painful right great toe. What is the differential diagnosis, and the most likely diagnosis? How would you investigate him, and how should the acute phase of this condition be treated?

Dr Paul Hamilton (Specialty Registrar, Chemical Pathology, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust) and Dr Gerry Gormley (Senior Academic General Practitioner, Centre for Medical Education, Queen’s University Belfast, Northern Ireland.) The patient kindly gave permission for use of this image.

GENERAL PRACTICE QUIZ

A right handed ‘Fettler’ presented to his family doctor with intermittent episodes of tingling, numbness and coolness in some of his fingers. On occasions he noticed self-liming episodes when some of his fingers would become pale compared to the rest of his hand. He was able to capture one of these episodes with his smart phone camera. What is the most likely diagnosis?

Dr Gerry Gormley, Senior Academic General Practitioner, Centre for Medical Education, Queen’s University Belfast, Northern Ireland. (The patient kindly gave permission for use of image in this article)

HISTORICAL QUIZ

Curiositas was intrigued to discover a physician’s handbook, used by a Co Tyrone doctor in 1911, entitled ‘Wellcome’s Medical Diary’.

What condition do you think this concoction of chemicals and potions was used to treat?

Of course it goes without saying – we would not recommend using these chemicals in current clinical practice – we have moved on considerably in the last 100 years!

POSTGRADUATE QUIZ

This 26 year old man presented to the neurosurgical department with modest posterior fossa symptomatology. He had no known family history. What abnormalities are present on these MRI and CT studies and what is the unifying diagnosis?

Dr Ian Bickle, Consultant Radiologist, Raja Isteri Penigran Anak Saleha Hospital, Bandar seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

AND FINALLY…..

This solitary tree, on the perimeter of a construction site was brought to Curiositas’s attention.

Do you know where this tree is? What is its local and global historical medical significance?

MEDICAL STUDENT SUBEDITOR INTERNSHIP

Curiositas is looking for a medical student to join the Curiositas Editorial team. This internship will be, in the first instance, for 1 year. The role will involve contributing to the production of the Curiositas section.

For further information on the post and the application process please email Dr Ian Bickle at firbeckkona@gmail.com. Applications for this post will be accepted up until the 14th October 2014.

ANSWERS See overleaf.

CONSIDER CONTRIBUTING TO CURIOSITAS?

Please refer to ‘Curiositas: Guidelines for contributors’ at http://www.ums.ac.uk/curiositas.html and email curiositas@ums.ac.uk with your ideas and submissions.
Book Case

Dr John Purvis
6 favourites from my bookshelf.

**THE AGE OF WONDER**
Holmes explores the relationship between the Arts and Science through the eyes of Joseph Banks. Banks began his scientific career as botanist on Captain Cook’s expedition to Tahiti (a somewhat erotic journey) and rose to become President of the Royal Society where he nurtured the blossoming careers of William and Caroline Herschel and Humphrey Davy. The Romantic poets and authors of those days were fascinated by “natural philosophy” as science was then known – Coleridge and Davy got high on nitrous oxide together whilst Mary Shelley wrote “Frankenstein – the Modern Prometheus” in response to experiments on “galvanism”. A fascinating book.

**THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE HERSCHEL OBJECTS**
Mark Bratton (Cambridge, 2011).
William Herschel started his working life as a composer (CDs and MP3s still available) but as 18th Century gentlevfolk often did, turned to something else. He devoted his life to astronomy and became famous for discovering Uranus (Uranus was father of Saturn who was father of Jupiter). With Royal backing, he built enormous telescopes and began systematically imaging the heavens. His sister, Caroline, specialised in comet hunting and possibly was the first female to have solo letters published in the *Transactions of the Royal Society*. This beautifully detailed book lists each of the 2500 or so, galaxies, star clusters and planetary nebulae that they documented. An invaluable resource for modern day amateurs looking for something more challenging than Charles Messier’s list.

**GAME OF GHOSTS**
Joe Simpson (Vintage, 1994)
I’m not a climber but I enjoy reading books about it and this is one of the best. It’s an autobiography of Joe Simpson – his previous book “Touching the Void” detailed how he survived when his friend deliberately cut Joe’s rope in atrocious conditions in the Andes. Joe clawed back to base camp with severe injuries. This is more of an insight into the psyche of climbers and the strange camaraderie they develop.

**THE PLACES IN BETWEEN**
Rory Stewart (Picador, 2004)
I first came across Rory when he narrated a TV documentary on the life of T.E. Lawrence – it was clear that this was someone with the deepest knowledge and respect for the East and appreciation of the acute sensitivity of mistrust engendered by the West’s past mistakes. This book documents Rory’s walk across Afghanistan in 2002 accompanied only by a stray dog. He encounters nobility and generosity as well as suspicion and warlords who would do anything to maintain their grip on their people. Only his ability to speak local languages and knowledge of Eastern culture keeps him alive. Rory is a politician now with a special brief for foreign affairs, perhaps one of the few who has first-hand knowledge of what he is talking about.

**CONSIDER PHELEAS**
Iain M Banks (Orbit, 1988).
Can machines be petulant, spiteful and funny? Back in 1988, Iain was already famous as author of “The Wasp Factory”. This was his first foray into science fiction and introduced us to a utopian galaxy of intelligent spaceships, wickedly sarcastic drones and enhanced human bodies that could release tailored hormones to promote any mood or body adaptation required. A dark sense of humour and sparse prose makes this a delight. Iain passed away in 2013 and will be sadly missed.

**POSTGRADUATE QUIZ**
The MRI brain and spinal cord studies demonstrate numerous small aloid enhancing lesions, which are most pronounced in the posterior fossa. These lesions are haemangio-eblastomas, albeit not the classical appearance of a cyst with an enhancing mural nodule. The CT study of the abdomen demonstrates pancreatic cysts, renal cysts and an enhancing cortical based mass in the lower pole of the left kidney, in keeping with a renal cell carcinoma. The later was confirmed on image guided biopsy. This correlation of findings is in keeping with Von Hippel Lindau disease – an autosomal dominant multisystem disorder.

**AND FINALLY…..**
This is an Oriental Plane (Platanus Orientalis) tree, which is planted near to Erskine house, on the Belfast City Hospital site. Professor Dimitrios Oreopoulos brought seeds from the Plane tree of Kos, and saplings from these seeds were planted across the Belfast City Hospital site in 1969. The Plane Tree of Kos is best known to the medical profession as the tree on the Aegean island of Kos, under which Hippocrates, the ‘father of medicine’, reputedly sat to consult and teach in the 5th Century. Professor Dimitrios Oreopoulos moved to Canada from Northern Ireland, where he became Professor of Nephrology at Toronto, gaining international fame for his development of continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis. For further information on this interesting story Dr James Douglas wrote an article in the UMJ (Douglas J, Dimitrios Oreopoulos, the Plane Tree of Kos and the Belfast City Hospital. Ulster Med J 2014;83(1):31-36). To read this article follow this link: http://www.ums.ac.uk/umj/083/083(1)/031.pdf

The ‘Erskine House’ Plane Tree of Kos (Belfast City Hospital) and Dr James Douglas (Retired Consultant Nephrologist, Belfast City Hospital) author of the article ‘Dimitrios Oreopoulos, the Plane Tree of Kos and the Belfast City Hospital. Ulster Med J 2014;83(1):31-36. (The author kindly gave permission for use of this image)