was the potential for neurological impairment in anorexia nervosa. While computerised tomographic changes have been documented in association with anorexia (Krieg *et al*, 1988), little has been written about definite neurological syndromes in relation to this condition. We have recently reported a case in which an episode of starvation in a male anorexic produced an acute neurological deficit (a neurogenic stutter) which thankfully disappeared upon refeeding (Byrne *et al*, 1993). As starvation/malnutrition is a well recognised cause of mental deterioration, with the associated lethargy, apathy and depression well described, we feel that neurological complications of anorexia are worthy of mention, and indeed worthy of further evaluation.

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ALAN BYRNE
MARY BYRNE
GARY HNATKO
TERRY ZIBIN

University of Alberta
Edmonton, Canada

CORRIGENDA

Journal, July 1993, **163**, 129. The letter "Bloodletting in bulimia nervosa" was also written by Tom Henderson; Bellsdyke Hospital, Bellsdyke Road, Lambert.

Journal, August 1993, **163**, 226. In Table 3, the *P* value for the comparison of mean scores for 'Private leisure' should be <0.01.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The need of medical evidence in cases of alleged insanity

Our attention was recently directed to a curious anomaly in certain legal proceedings at the Cape, an account of which we published in a letter from Dr. Cartwright Reed in our issue of Jan, 21st, at page 167. The writer had up to the occurrence of the case which he records been uder the impression that "no person could be pronounced of 'unsound mind' without the support of medical testimony." He doubts whether any British jury would venture to return such a verdict unless it was supported by expert evidence. It cannot but be regarded as a most unsatisfactory proceeding that any person should be adjudged to be insane without the support of medical testimony. That a British jury has power, even in a criminal case, to return a verdict of "Guilty of the act, but insane at the time it was committed," without medical evidence is shown in the case of the Rev. Henry J. Dodwell, who was tried before the late Baron Huddleston in March, 1878, for "assault" after firing a pistol at the then Master of the Rolls, Sir George Jessel. Mr. Dodwell was ordered to be detained during Her Majesty's pleasure as a criminal lunatic. We are strongly of opinion that cases where the existence of insanity is alleged ought never to be decided without medical evidence.

Reference

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Researched by Henry Rollin, Emeritus Consultant Psychiatrist, Horton Hospital, Epsom, Surrey

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