British Journal of Psychiatry (1996), **168,** 254

CORRIGENDUM

GREGG, W., MEDLEY, I, FOWLER-DIXON, R., *et al* (1995) Psychological consequences of the Kegworth air disaster. *BJP*, **168,** 812–817. Page 815, first column, bottom line to end of paragraph, should read:

First, mean Injury Severity Scores were significantly lower in those who went on to develop PTSD. Second, those who were discharged from hospital within one month tended to be more likely to develop PTSD than those discharged later.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

Hystero-epilepsy: dual existence

Dr ALBERT WILSON (Leytonstone) showed a girl, aged 12, who in April, 1895, had severe influenza, followed by meningitis and mania. After six weeks the cephalagia disappeared and muscular symptoms developed – twitching, opisthotonos, with lividity and coma. She had many fits a day. In June the old symptoms disappeared and a fresh train of phenomena appeared. When in an apparently normal state she would shake, turn a somersault, and enter a new and different mental state. Her memory for all events during health was quite gone; but she would remember in one such fit what happened in a previous one. Thus was established a complete dual existence. By education she learned the names of most things, but always employed baby pronunciation. She would write backwards and that quickly. When these attacks developed she lost all power of walking or standing till about August, 1895. In the early stage she had fits of catalepsy – chiefly rigidity of the flexors. At times she had five or six fits a day, lasting a few minutes, and at her worst periods they lasted for days. She recovered from them quite suddenly, was never surprised at her surroundings, but very composed, and said she remembered nothing during the attack. The most striking feature was once when she had severe toothache during an attack. He gave chloroform and removed two teeth. On regaining consciousness she recognised that the teeth and pain were gone. Her father hypnotised her and brought her to the normal state when she made the discovery of the blood and the loss of the teeth, but she never remembered the previous pain or taking chloroform. She had now (January 24th) been in the anormal state for three days. There had been many variations, and she had four different existences besides the normal: (1) "Nib" for "Old Nick" when she had violent passions, and biting, and slid down the banisters; (2) "dreadful wicked thing," when everything was reversed, black being white, asleep being awake, the head being the foot, and so on; (3) "Allie" when she was amiable and good; (4) her ordinary fits, as already described. Other phenomena occasionally occurred. Thus, she was at times completely deaf and dumb, or there might be loss of memory, so that she did not know those whom she ordinarily knew during the fits. During the last three or four weeks a fresh phase had occurred. She was now – in January, 1896, – living mentally in July, 1895, this having followed on a mental blank of a fortnight's duration. This was shown by her imagining events to have just happened which happened in July, and other circumstances. Her general health and nutrition were good. She had not yet menstruated. Treatment had been rest and quiet and fresh air. Tea and coffee caused attacks of mania. The thyroid treatment had had no apparent effect.

Reference

British Medical Journal, February 1896, 275.

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

https://doi.org/10.1192/S0007125000067179 Published online by Cambridge University Press