the prescribed dose. On admission to hospital he was restless and disinhibited. His speech was pressurised and cirumstantial. He described his mood as "being on top of the world". He also had vivid complex visual hallucinations of animals, and auditory hallucinations of friends talking to him. He was disorientated with poor short and long-term memory function.

His Beconase spray was stopped. He improved over a 6-week period while being treated with haloperidol, and was discharged home. Three months after presentation he was well, other than some slight reduction in short-term memory.

The only abnormal physical investigation was a Computerised tomography brain scan, which showed diffuse cerebral atrophy and a lacuna infarct adjacent to the head of the right caudate nucleus.

Beclomethasone dipropionate is a potent corticosteroid used for the topical treatment of seasonal and perennial rhinitis. It is approximately ten times more potent at a cellular level than prednisolone. The recommended dose is 400 microgrammes per day (two 50 microgramme doses in each nostril twice a day). At this dose its efficacy is similar to 5–10 mg/day of oral prednisolone. Systemic effects do not occur with recommended dosages (Mygind, 1982). At higher doses adrenal suppression has been demonstrated (Harris *et al*, 1974).

Psychiatric effects have not before been reported. This case suggests that mania can follow higher than recommended doses and emphasises the susceptibility of the organically impaired elderly patient to mania.

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A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

Lunatics in Irish workhouses

The total number maintained during the past year amounted to 4,083, the idiot class being composed of 1,903 individuals, 360 of them being epileptic, and the demented of 2,180, of whom 389 were epileptic. On the whole, they are considerately treated, and regarded as special objects of benevolence, while, as infirm or sick, their dietary, which is discretionary with the physicians, is above that given to the ordinary workhouse inmate. The Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums have recommended the advisability of providing in each district one or more poorhouses, so arranged as to accommodate hopeless, aged, and tranquil cases, thereby disembarrassing asylums to a certain extent, and affording means of admitting into them curable and urgent cases at all times, without incurring the erection of new, or the enlargement of existing, asylums, and avoiding an uncalled for expense in their maintenance. If, at the annual rate of £12 or £14 per head, certain classes of the insane can, without any detriment to them, be supported in one institution, there is no reasonable cause why in another their capitation maintenance should amount to £22.

Reference

British Medical Journal, 31 August 1889, 489.

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