IATROLOGS AND IATRONYMS

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The world of medical terminology abounds with some of the most amazing words that word-lovers are ever likely to come across.

Many of these words, though, are destined never to be appreciated by legions of logologists. In our small way, we are going to attempt to remedy this. We are going to discuss several medical words (IATROLOGS or IATRONYMS) in the hope that one, some or all of them eventually find their way into your everyday speech.

How often do you hear rumbling sounds coming from your stomach? More important, perhaps, how often do other people hear your intestinal gurglings? Next time you experience this condition, make some remark about it and let slip the word BORBORYGMUS. People will certainly appreciate the sound of this word more than the sound of your stomach. Perhaps such abdominal cacophony was brought on by your habit of eating uncooked vegetables, or OMOLACHANOPHAGY. But the question arises: why on earth do you eat uncooked vegetables? Possibly you are unable to distinguish cooked vegetables from uncooked ones due to an abnormality in your perception of taste, or ALLOTRIOGEUSIA. Let us turn to somewhat different eating habits now. If you eat very little because of your extreme loathing for food, then we suggest you see a doctor about your BDELigyMia. Should you be one of those persons with an insane desire to eat yourself, then you are most certainly suffering from AUTOPHAGIA. If, however, your eating habits are more prosaic and you only eat earth then CHTHONOPHAGIA is the name of your game. For our part, we cannot imagine how anyone could actually eat the earth underfoot. We have this overpowering dread of contamination, or MOLYSMOPHOBIA, which necessitates our avoiding all contact with dirt. The very thought of dirt makes us incredibly nervous.

The medical world seems to have special words for all types of nervousness. If you consistently pick your fingernails, then ONYCHODREPIA is your affliction. If, on the other hand, you bite your fingernails, then ONYCHOPHAGIA affects you (did you get the pun in this sentence?). It is a well-known fact among churchgoers that many clergymen are affected with nervousness when appearing before their congregations; PHRENIAS sweat excessively; JOYCESS in the sweating of the breath; TRAGOMBASTES is accompanied by B.O.? Other persons with an insane desire to eat themselves are suffering from AUTOPHAGIA. If, however, your eating habits are more prosaic and you only eat earth then CHTHONOPHAGIA is the name of your game. For our part, we cannot imagine how anyone could actually eat the earth underfoot. We have this overpowering dread of contamination, or MOLYSMOPHOBIA, which necessitates our avoiding all contact with dirt. The very thought of dirt makes us incredibly nervous.
Do you often get the feeling that your enemies are stealing your ideas, your innermost thoughts? You do? Splendid! We congratulate you on being a prime case of CASTROPHRENIA, though we simultaneously offer you our sympathies. (We must remark here that the British Liberal Party is a chronic sufferer of CASTROPHRENIA.) Other upstanding folk also suffer from delusions. Some are deluded into thinking that they are cats (witness the terms fat cats and peg-cats); this type of delusion goes by the name GALEANTHROPY.

Other persons are under the delusion that they are unable to stand, STASIBASIPHOBIA. (Could it be that these persons are not upstanding as non-sufferers?) A term that we are sure everyone has heard of is MEGALOMANIA, the delusion of one's own greatness. On the subject of MEGALOMANIA we are reminded of a particular politician and his quotes concerning "pointy-head professors". The condition of having a pointy-head should be correctly referred to as ACROCEPHALIA, ACROCEPHALY or OXYCEPHALY. The term "pointy-head" reminds us of a similar-sounding term, "pot head", a person habituated to cannabis, hashish, marijuana, or whatever. Pot head is not to be found in any medical dictionary although CANNA-BIDULIA, a word meaning exactly the same thing, is. While many people will deny it, others will proclaim that drug-taking is but one facet of juvenile delinquency. This term has a dated sound to it (circa late 1950s) and we prefer to use the more up-to-date HEBES-PHALMIA. Yet other people will claim that drug-taking induces a greater susceptibility to leading a life of crime or, as such susceptibility is called, BLABAGOOGY. The law-abiding citizen, when confronted with the ever-increasing crime figures, may feel like tearing his (or her) hair out. This urge, TRICHOLOGIA or TRICHOTILLO-MANIA, is to be resisted as it can lead, so we are told, to PARACOMIA (partial baldness) or even HOLACOMIA (total baldness).

While we are on the subject of hair, it should be noted that many women suffer from an aversion for bald men, PHALACRESPIA. Just...
as certain women have this aversion for bald men, so many men have an aversion for PLANISTETHIC, or flat-chested, women. While bald men are donning wigs PLANISTETHIC women are taking refuge in COLPOMIMIA, the wearing of COLPOMIMS, pads used to give the breasts a fuller appearance.

Many illnesses are termed by members of the medical profession conditions or MEDICOSTAUSES. Let's examine some of these. If a patient calls everything by the wrong name you can be sure that his condition is PSEUDOPARAPHRASIA. Should the patient be subject to extremes of moodiness then POIKILOTHYMIA may be the trouble. Some patients exhibit marked increases in their appetites for food; they are probably all stricken with OREXOPHILLIA. Anyone suffering from ARISTOPHRENIA can sit back feeling quite smug for that is the condition of having a superior mind or intellect. We should point out here, with our usual modesty, that we "suffer" from an extreme form of ARISTOPHRENIA! If you do everything that the toothpaste ads exhort you to do you will, apparently, soon have a mouthful of beautiful teeth (not to mention hordes of admirers). The condition of having beautiful teeth is called CALLIDENTIA. We recall some British organization putting out a statement a year or two ago indicating that only 7% of people in Britain were subject to CALLIDENTIA. It would seem that the other 93% suffered, to some degree, from CACODENTIA or CACODONTIA, the condition of having bad teeth.

Let us turn from conditions to fears. We are not quite sure that a distinction between the two can be made, but since medical dictionaries make the distinction we may as well go along with them. Do you have any fears? Are there any little things which scare the living daylight out of you? If your answer is no, then you are suffering from PANTAPHOBIA or HYPOPHOBIA, fearlessness. If your answer is yes, then you could be suffering from any one of hundreds of well-defined fears. Possibly you have a fear of failure (KAKORRAPHIOPHOBIA), or a fear of thunder (BRONTOPHOBIA), or a fear of trains or travelling in them (SIDERODROMOPHOBIA), or a fear of lice (PFTHRIOPHOBIA), or a fear of tuberculosis (PHTHISISPHOBIA), or a fear of choking while slumbering (PNIGOPHOBIA), or a fear of crossing bridges (GEPHYROPHOBIA), or a fear of robbers (HARPAXOPHOBIA). You may even have a fear of girls, which is PARTHENOPHOBIA. Possibly your fear is of everything or the unknown even; both fears go by the name PANTOPHOBIA. The reader will see that this word is only one letter different from PANTAPHOBIA which we have already mentioned. However, we have been unable to find the correct medical term for our very own fear. We are absolutely terrified of long-toed, or ARACHNODACTYLOUS, comedians who suffer from WITZELSUCHT (a mental condition marked by futile attempts to be funny). Oddly enough, the medical

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Over the course of time, your fears may have developed into pure unadulterated hates. If you possess such a hate for your father, don't be surprised when people call you a MISOPATER; if it is your mother who is the object of your loathing, then you are a MISOMATER. The correct medical label for war-haters (which includes us) is MISOPOLEMIAC. We know that you as a convinced logologist are not afraid of any word in the English language, however long or short. But a few wayward souls do go in fear of some words. This fear is ONOMATOPHOBIA.

Since this article is basically about words, perhaps a few words about words wouldn't go amiss. Did you know that the meaningless inclusion of words in your speech is EMBOOLALIA? If you didn't, you do now. Have you ever forgotten a particular word or name, and, in your efforts to recall it, become increasingly annoyed with yourself for not being able to remember it? This obsession with the recall of a forgotten word/name is graced with the name LOGANAMNOSIS. Don't forget that, will you? The actual tendency to forget words (not your obsessions in trying to recall them) is LETHOLOGICA. Heaven forbid that you suffer from both this and LOGANAMNOSIS!

Obscene language is AISCHROLOGY or LAGNOGLOSSY and must be distinguished from the use of the same thing; the actual use of obscene language is AISCHROLALIA or COPROLALIA. If, however, the only four-letter words you utter are in some artificial language, then your use of such a language is IDIOLALIA. (Medical dictionaries that we examined didn't make it clear whether 'artificial' meant made up on the spur of the moment -- i.e., babbling -- or pertaining to non-natural but recognized languages such as Esperanto, Ro, Volapuk, Obshcheslaviansky, Yazyk and the like.)

If, when you were at school, you were slow in learning to read or write, you were probably called a slow learner or a late developer. Perhaps you didn't display much aptitude at learning to read and write because you suffered from STREPHOSYMBOLIA, difficulty in distinguishing between like-looking letters. Alternatively, you may have had difficulties with spelling. The inability to correctly spell words is CACOGRAMMIA. Even supposing you could recognize letters and spell words correctly, you might still suffer from ATAXAPHASIA or ACATAPHASIA, an inability to arrange words to form sentences. Possibly you never learnt how to read and/or write because you hadn't got the slightest idea what your teachers were actually saying to you. This inability to comprehend spoken language is called LOGOKOPHOSIS or ACOUSMATAGNOSIS.