



# Physician's Lexicon

## A Frantic Assemblage of Words

Truly, English is the most versatile, most expressive of languages, particularly in conveying nuanced meanings, subtle shades of difference and emotional moods. Consider the many word-choices in expressing the feelings, perhaps tinged with anger, experienced by an anxiety-ridden, manic individual.

The word frenzy comes to mind. This noun is usually defined as someone exhibiting wild excitement, visible agitation, even excessive spiritual enthusiasm. The word stems directly from the Latin, *phrenesis* which comes from a Greek word, *phreniticos*, meaning inflammation of the brain. The English terms, frenetic and frantic, are both derived, via the French [*frenetique*], from the same source. Medical terms such as phrenitis [an obsolete word for encephalitis], phrenology and schizophrenia also descend from this word. The phrenic nerve is from a more primitive and less defined Greek root [*phren-*] variously meaning mind, heart or dia-

phragm. On the other hand, the English word, fervent, meaning warmth or intensity of spirit, comes from the Latin, *fervere*, meaning to seethe or boil. Analogous words include fervency, effervescent and ferment.

Amok, sometimes spelled amuck, is a Malaysian word describing overwhelming agitation allegedly leading to homicide. W. Somerset Maugham wrote a short tale about the emotional state of amok, describing it as though it were a tropical pestilence, a jungle madness and, much like malaria, capable of affecting anyone. Stefan Zweig authored a novella called *Amok*.

Berserk is defined as one who is a homicidal maniac, violently frenzied in behavior. The word is of Scandinavian origin and was likely the name of an ancient, legendary Norse warrior. *Berserk!* is also the name of a Joan Crawford 1968 movie of eminently forgettable content.

Delirium, an acute pathologic state of febrile excitement sometimes associated with delusions. It stems from the Latin, *delirare*, meaning to turn aside from the furrow. From this agronomic meaning eventually came the metaphoric sense of being cast to one side, of being deviant, eccentric, even deranged.

Deranged, a hybrid word from the Latin, *dis-*, meaning apart or asunder, and the French verb, *ranger*, meaning to put into line thus yielding a word now meaning to push away from conventional sanity, to make insane.

Manic [and mania as well as words ending with -mancy such as necromancy] are taken from the Greek *manichos* meaning from the mind or insane.

Enthusiasm, meaning filled with zeal and fervor, is derived from the Greek, *theos* [meaning god] and thus had yielded an earlier meaning of being divinely inspired.

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## VITAL STATISTICS

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### Rhode Island Monthly Vital Statistics Report Provisional Occurrence Data from the Division of Vital Records

Underlying Cause of Death	Reporting Period			
	March 2008	12 Months Ending with March 2008		
	Number (a)	Number (a)	Rates (b)	YPLL (c)
Diseases of the Heart	289	2,731	258.2	3,265.0
Malignant Neoplasms	199	2,328	220.1	6,442.5
Cerebrovascular Diseases	33	393	37.2	650.0
Injuries (Accidents/Suicide/Homicide)	43	527	49.8	8,564.0
COPD	52	476	45.0	347.5

Vital Events	Reporting Period		
	September 2008	12 Months Ending with September 2008	
	Number	Number	Rates
Live Births	1,046	12,566	11.9*
Deaths	724	10,037	9.5*
Infant Deaths	(8)	(82)	6.5#
Neonatal Deaths	(7)	(65)	5.2#
Marriages	397	5,452	5.2*
Divorces	194	2,778	2.6*
Induced Terminations	not available	not available	not available
Spontaneous Fetal Deaths	49	790	62.9#
Under 20 weeks gestation	(41)	(718)	57.1#
20+ weeks gestation	(8)	(72)	5.7#

(a) Cause of death statistics were derived from the underlying cause of death reported by physicians on death certificates.

(b) Rates per 100,000 estimated population of 1,057,832 (US Census: July 1, 2007)

(c) Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL)

*Notes: Estimated total population for Rhode Island has been updated in this month's rates.*

*Totals represent vital events which occurred in Rhode Island for the reporting periods listed above. Monthly provisional totals should be analyzed with caution because the numbers may be small and subject to seasonal variation.*

\* Rates per 1,000 estimated population

# Rates per 1,000 live births