

RESOURCES

Geriatric Depression Scale available on-line at: <http://www.stanford.edu/~yesavage/GDS.english.short.score.html>

REFERENCES

1. Depression. In: Beers MH, Jones TV, Berkwits M, et al. *The Merck Manual of Geriatrics, 3rd Edition*, Chapter 33. <http://www.merck.com/mkgr/mmg/contents.jsp>
2. Kennedy GJ. Depression and Other Mood Disorders. In: Pompei P, Christmas C, Counsell, et al., *Geriatric Review Syllabus: A Core Curriculum in Geriatric Medicine, 6th Edition* New York: American Geriatrics Society, 2006: 269-80.

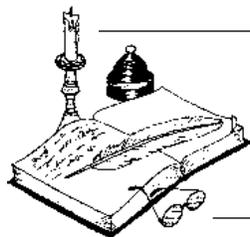
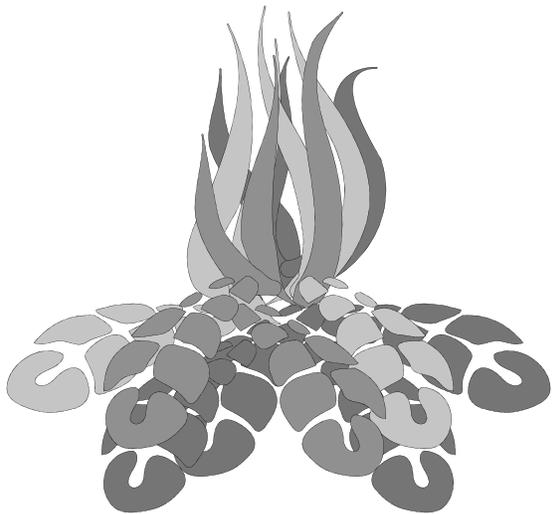
Ana Tuya Fulton, MD, is Assistant Professor of Medicine, The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University.

Disclosure of Financial Interests

The author has no financial interests to disclose.

9SOW-RI-GERIATRICS-062009

THE ANALYSES UPON WHICH THIS PUBLICATION IS BASED were performed under Contract Number 500-02-RI02, funded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Health and Human Services, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. The author assumes full responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the ideas presented.



Physician's Lexicon

Those Viable Words

Verdi's opera, La Traviata, was first performed at La Fenice in Venice on March 6, 1853. The title, La Traviata, literally translated as 'The Woman Led Astray', contains the Latin root, *via*, meaning 'the way'. An astonishing number of English words incorporate this root.

Consider the word, trivial, first meaning 'that which belongs at the junction of three roads'; but colloquially, something that is commonplace, vulgar – or, in a word, trivial. The word appears in its original form, *trivium*, meaning the three paths or ways, and is the name given to the entering curriculum in medieval universities. The three courses, or scholarly paths, were grammar, logic [or dialectic] and rhetoric. This was followed by the *quadrivium*, the four ways, embracing arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. Only then was the university

student prepared to engage in the study of medicine. The pathway to the contemporary study of medicine in the West is equally formidable, but in different ways.

The word, *via*, appears in words such as deviate [to depart from the path]; obviate [to make unnecessary, literally to keep from the path]; obvious [clear, manifest, literally, lying in the way]; and previous [literally, coming before, leading the way.]

The root, *via*, is clearly apparent in words such as viaduct [a bridge carrying a path], viatic [pertaining to a road], viameter [an instrument for measuring distances on roads] and viaticum [monies set aside for travel.] The word, voyage is derived from the Latin, *viaticus* [pertaining to the road] but has been altered in spelling in its passage through Vulgate Latin and later, French. The English

words, envoy and convey, are also derived from the Latin, *via*.

English words such as violet, viola and violin are similarly descended from the Latin, *vitulare*, meaning an aliveness, an exultation. Violate, on the other hand, stems from the Latin, *violare*, meaning related to strength or force.

Medically oriented words such as viable or viability, capable of living or growing and a looser, more current meaning of feasibility, are based rather, on the Latin word, *vita*, meaning life. The word, vial, a small container usually of glass to hold some liquid, and sometimes spelled phial, is from an Old English word, *fiole*.

Finally, the word, viand, an article of food and by inference a culinary delicacy, comes from the Latin, *vivere*, meaning to live.

– STANLEY M. ARONSON, MD