**RESOURCES**

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

**REFERENCES**


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**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* [money 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 lesser, 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