

gan failure after receiving the so-called hydrogel injections in the buttocks. Investigations revealed they were injected with industrial silicone.<sup>4</sup>

With the potential for irreparable injury and even death befalling those who seek this type of cosmetic surgery, it is imperative that the medical community be aware of this problem and be vigilant in the treatment of possible bacterial infections.

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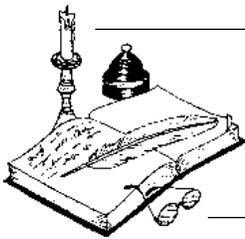
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# Physician's Lexicon

## A Graveyard of Words

**December is an inopportune time to** explore words pertaining to death, interment and cremation. But these words pertaining to the inevitable departure of humans need to be understood as readily as the terminology that defines births and new human beginnings. The art of medicine, dedicated to the preservation of life, understandably refrains from excessive discussion of the technical features accompanying death. Yet, except for those whose existence is based on denial of reality, the substance of death is there; and it is accompanied by a small vocabulary

of its own. Some are of classical Greco-Latin origin; some Anglo-Saxon and a small number are eponyms.

The word, death, is from the Saxon and Teutonic word, *doth*. Cemetery, stems from the Latin, *coemeterium*, meaning a room to sleep, and is derived earlier from a Greek word meaning 'a place to lie down' which, in turn, is related to a Latin word, *coitus*, meaning a coming together, as in the word coition, or even a sexual union.

The Greek root for death (or that which is extinguished) is *thanato-*, appearing in words such as thanatology (the study of death) and euthanasia (a painless death; using the Greek prefix, *eu-*, meaning well or good.) And then there was William Cullen Bryant's poetic meditation on death called *Thanatopsis*, written at age 17.

Mausolus, was the king of Caria. When he died, he was interred in a magnificent sepulchral monument constructed by his wife, Artemisia, giving rise to the word, mausoleum. A sepulcher descends directly from the Latin, *sepulcrum*, meaning a tomb. The word, tomb, is also from the Greek, *tumbos*, meaning a mound and is cognate with the Latin, *tumulus*, meaning a raised heap of earth.

A sarcophagus—a stone coffin of ancient Greece—literally means that which eats flesh. The Greek root, *sarco-* (as in words such as sarcoidosis, sarcomere and sarcoma) means flesh; and the Greek root, *phagos* (as in words such as phagocyte) means to eat, to consume. A casket is not a diminutive of cask but rather a corruption of the French, *cas-sette*, meaning a box or a chest.

Cremation derives from the Latin, *cremare*, meaning to burn or consume by fire. It has been occasionally pointed out that only the letter 'm' separates the word creation from cremation.

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