

Physician's Lexicon

Those Esoteric, Exoteric and Fantabulous Diagnoses

Medical terminology is a living, constantly expanding, assemblage of terms with its population ever increasing as new diseases, innovative procedures and revised etiologies are discovered. And thus, in our rush to learn new medical words, we have allowed many of the older terms to wither from extended disuse. A few of these languishing words are listed, and redefined, below.

Medicine is renown for its identification, and naming, of obscure fears. But many of these acknowledged phobias have lately been unacknowledged. **Blennophobia**, the fear of slime, has rarely been diagnosed although the medical profession has often used the root, *blenos* (Greek, meaning mucus) in a variety of words such as blennorrhea, blennostasis and blennophthalmia. **Gamophobia**, a fear of marriage, uses the Greek root, *gametes/gamete*, meaning husband or wife, and forms the basis for more popular words such as gametocyte and gametogenesis. **Demophobia**, on the other

hand, describes fear of crowds of persons, married or not, and is distinguishable from **agoraphobia**, the fear of open spaces whether or not crowded with people.

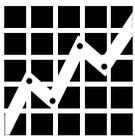
Kakorrhaphophobia, the morbid fear of failure, derives its root from the Greek word, *kakos*, meaning bad as in cacesthesia signifying any abnormal sensation. The root should not be confused with the Latin, *caco*, meaning defecation. **Metrophobia**, the fear of poetry, defines a very rare emotional disorder found largely in elementary school children. The Greek, *metron*, means a measure, in this case, poetic meter; it is not to be confused with *metra*, meaning uterus, as in the word, metrorrhagia.

In contrast, there are those clinical words pertaining to an excessive adoration of something such as **ailurophilia**, an abnormal love of cats. The Greek, *ailouros*, means cats. **Lygophilia**, a love of darkness, descends from the Greek word, *lyge*, meaning twilight.

Words employing the root, *-phrenia*, generally define mental disorders such as schizophrenia. Someone who is frenetic (formerly spelled phrenetic) is a victim of fanatical frenzy. **Epistemophrenia** defines individuals with a pathological preoccupation with the acquisition and retention of knowledge. Epistemology is generally defined as that segment of philosophy that studies the origin, nature and limits of human knowledge. This is in contrast to **eschatophobia**, the fear of terminal events such as death.

And finally, a few obscure manias. **Drapetomania**, is the inordinate desire to run away from home; **Phaneromania**, is the compulsion to lick at or scratch one's skin; **Clinomania**, is the compulsion to stay in bed; **Habromania**, is the experiencing of extreme joy, euphoria. And **Onychophagia**, the biting of one's nails, might also be included in the category of the manias.

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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			
	May 2009	12 Months Ending with May 2009		
	Number (a)	Number (a)	Rates (b)	YPLL (c)
Diseases of the Heart	212	2,450	233.2	3,032.5
Malignant Neoplasms	172	2,247	213.8	6,230.0
Cerebrovascular Diseases	36	410	39.0	752.0
Injuries (Accidents/Suicide/Homicide)	52	552	52.5	8,995.5
COPD	31	469	44.6	327.0

Vital Events	Reporting Period		
	November 2009	12 Months Ending with November 2009	
	Number	Number	Rates
Live Births	909	12,191	11.4*
Deaths	787	9,605	9.0*
Infant Deaths	(5)	(81)	6.6#
Neonatal Deaths	(5)	(64)	5.2#
Marriages	323	6,237	5.8*
Divorces	227	3,094	2.9*
Induced Terminations	289	4,195	344.1#
Spontaneous Fetal Deaths	32	699	57.3#
Under 20 weeks gestation	(28)	(618)	50.7#
20+ weeks gestation	(4)	(81)	6.6#

(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 1,050,788

(c) Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL)

Note: 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