

lightning cataclysm of homicide or suicide. Public reaction to such events may range from indifference in the face of minor local disturbances (although personal responses from those involved in the storm may cause climatic deterioration!), to condemnation, inquiry, and possibly litigation. When there is a storm about there is a public expectancy that the psychiatrist is a better forecaster than the weatherman.

Of course, psychiatrists, like weather forecasters must make every effort to improve their data base, theory and practice, but like meteorologists they will from time to time make genuine mistakes, only evident with the wisdom of hindsight. They may also make preventable errors for which they must bear responsibility, but overall the public, when judging psychiatrists, might well remember the weather, and consider:

Whether the weather be fine,
Or whether the weather be not
We'll weather the weather
Whatever the weather
Whether we like it or not

GLIECK, J. (1988) *Chaos*. London: Macdonald.

PALMER T. (1992) A weather eye on unpredictability. In *The New Scientist Guide to Chaos*. (ed. N. Hall) London: Penguin Books.

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'Lottomania'

Sir: I wish to describe the first case report, to my knowledge, of a delusional belief incorporating the National Lottery. The patient was seen shortly after the recent institution of the lottery.

A 58-year-old married woman was admitted to hospital after a two week history of illness. She had become concerned that she had won the lottery and because of this she and her family were being persecuted. She believed that her neighbours were trying to get this money and that she and various members of her family were at risk of great harm. The patient was agitated, restless and had been sleeping poorly. She displayed grandiose and persecutory delusions.

Following admission and the commencement of neuroleptic medication the symptoms resolved over the next three weeks, and at follow-up she has remained well.

I would wager this specific type of delusional belief is likely to become increasingly common given the current public and media preoccupation with the lottery. Might I venture to suggest the term 'lottomania'?

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