

## Zero tolerance of violence

Behr *et al* (2005) rightly draw attention to the advantages of those with various forms of mental disturbance, in some circumstances, being held to be accountable for their actions (see also Smith & Donovan, 1990; Prins, 2002, 2005: chapter 2). However, their comments concerning the degree to which alcohol and other drugs may totally erode criminal responsibility need slight qualification. It is of course true that, in general terms, the ingestion of alcohol and other drugs not only

does not excuse culpability, but may in fact exacerbate it. There are, however, instances where specific intent has to be proved (as for example in homicide), where the ingestion of such substances may negate full responsibility (Homicide Act 1957, Section 2). In addition, the unknowing ingestion of alcohol, for example 'spiking' someone's non-alcoholic beverage with alcohol, may be held to exclude responsibility. The law on this whole topic is somewhat complicated, and has, from time to time, led to some equivocal decisions in the higher courts.

**Behr, G. M., Ruddock, J. P., Benn, P., et al (2005)** Zero tolerance of violence by users of mental health services: the need for an ethical framework. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **187**, 7–8.

**Prins, H. (2002)** Cui bono? Withholding treatment from violent and abusive patients in NHS trusts: 'We don't have to take this'. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, **13**, 391–406.

**Prins, H. (2005)** *Offenders, Deviants or Patients?* (3rd edn). New York: Brunner–Routledge.

**Smith, J. & Donovan, M. (1990)** The prosecution of psychiatric in-patients. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, **1**, 379–383.

**H. Prins** | Home Close Road, Houghton on the Hill, Leicester LE7 9GT, UK

## One hundred years ago

### The First Belgian Congress of Neurology and Psychiatry

ON Sept. 28th and 29th there was held at Liège, in connexion with the International Exhibition which is now in progress in the city, the first Belgian Congress of Neurology and Psychiatry. The opening meeting took place in the buildings of the university, where M. de Latour, Director-General of the Ministry of Justice, received delegates from France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Turkey, and Roumania. Dr. Glorieux began the formal business of the Congress by delivering an address dealing with the occurrence of neurasthenia among the working classes. This disease was, he remarked, popularly supposed to be confined almost entirely to persons for whom the struggle for existence was a mental rather than a physical one, though

probably the unrestrained pursuit of pleasure was also in some degree responsible for its development. Statistics, however, showed that in both Germany and Belgium the incidence of neurasthenia upon artisans was very marked, while in Scandinavia insurance companies have been so severely taxed by the extension of the malady that they have found it advisable to construct special sanatoriums. Dr. Glorieux referred to the view that neurasthenia may be due to the toxic effects of influenza but he himself attributed the disease to the insanitary environment in which work is often carried on and he looked to the more general introduction of machinery and the consequent regulation of the conditions of labour for improvement in this regard. In the afternoon Mdlle. Joteyko, chief of the Psycho-Physiological

Laboratory of the University of Brussels, contributed a paper on the Sense of Pain and Dr. Lannois of Lyons one upon Epileptiform Spasm of the Foot, while Dr. Heilporn of Antwerp described a case of Acromegaly. The morning of the second day was devoted to a visit to the asylum of St. Agatha and to the discussion of Dr. Cuylit's paper entitled 'Work in the Therapeutics of Mental Maladies.' A visit was also paid to the *maison de santé* at Glain and after lunch the scientific section of the exhibition was inspected.

### REFERENCE

*Lancet*, 7 October 1905, 1049.

Researched by Henry Rollin, Emeritus Consultant Psychiatrist, Horton Hospital, Epsom, Surrey

## Corrigendum

Substance use disorders and the orbitofrontal cortex. Systematic review of behavioural decision-making and neuroimaging studies. *BJP*, **187**, 209–220. The fourth sentence of

the first paragraph (p. 209) should read: It processes the reward value and/or affective valence of environmental stimuli, assesses the future consequences of the individual's

own actions (response selection) and inhibits inappropriate behaviours (response inhibition; Bechara & Damasio, 2002; Krawczyk, 2002; Fan *et al*, 2003).