

**Owen, G., Harland, R., Antonova, E., et al (2004)** Jaspers' concept of primary delusion (letter). *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **185**, 77–78.

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### Twenty ways to scratch your bum?

First, can I applaud the *Journal* for publishing Dr Bourne's (2004) rude and rousing

letter, but also express a concern and hope that the Editor does actually read and take note of the letters sent 'to him'. I have recently had reason to re-read Bleuler, Jaspers and Jung on the origins, phenomenology and understanding of schizophrenia, and been warmed and deeply impressed by the intimacy, humanity and complex insightfulness they offer. Their writings are richly populated by the people they studied, not a few of whom seem rather like my patients too. Their work stands in striking contrast to the current literature, not

least because there is not a single table of numbers in their collected works.

We appear to have lost something of great value, and I am less sure of the value of the dispassionate, anonymous, scientific material that has replaced it. Time to redress the balance?

**Bourne, H. (2004)** A new name for the *Journal*? (letter). *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **184**, 455.

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## One hundred years ago

### Clinical note on a case of obstinate constipation due to collection of plum-stones in the rectum. By J. Ogilvie Veitch, MB, CMEdin, Second Assistant Medical Officer, the Asylum, Worcester

A FEMALE patient, M. W—, in this asylum, suffering from dementia, and who had previously been cleanly in her habits, was noticed by the nurse to soil her clothes daily, and that, although this occurred, she never had a proper movement of the bowels. She was sleepless and restless at night, but

complained of no pain, and took her food in a satisfactory manner. This state of affairs had been progressing for about ten days, when it was brought under the notice of her medical attendant. Various purgatives were administered by the mouth, and these proving ineffectual, and on purgative enemata being tried and also proving abortive, a rectal examination was made, when it was discovered that the lower bowel was filled with plum-stones, which were caked with the faeces into a hard mass. These were digitally removed, and numbered about fifty. After this treatment the

patient's bowels acted normally. The special feature of this case seems to be the facility with which these stones, considering their size and sharp edges, passed through the whole length of the intestine, without giving rise to any serious symptoms.

### REFERENCE

*Journal of Mental Science*, 1904, 307.

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