Paget’s disease of bone—the definitive review

As we live longer the prevalence of metabolic bone diseases has substantially increased placing a significant strain on patients, their families and healthcare providers. The Journal has recently published definitive reviews both on stress fractures and bisphosphonate therapy in these clinical conditions.1,2 Paget’s disease of the bone (PDB) is prevalent in up to 8% of the UK population over 80 years of age. In this issue of the QJM, Professor Ralston and colleagues provide a comprehensive review on the aetiology, diagnosis and management of this disabling condition.

Autologous stem cell, transplantation and aggressive Crohn’s disease

Snowden and colleagues report on the use of autologous stem cell transplantation in steroid-resistant Crohn’s disease. Up to 10% of patients with this disease may have this aggressive clinical phenotype which is associated with significantly enhanced morbidity and mortality. The QJM has in its recent review series and in previous articles highlighted the future of stem cells as therapies in disease.3,4 The rationale for the treatment allows both the induction of disease remission and a ‘resetting’ of the immune system that allows long-term disease control with potentially previously ineffective treatments. The uniqueness of this article is the reporting of the generally favourable long-term follow-up of up to 10 years on this cohort of patients. The authors conclude that strategies to build on this approach including post-transplant salvage and maintenance treatment merit further evaluation via prospective clinical trials.

The vampire myth—potential medical roots

The vampire myth has entered popular consciousness following the publication in 1897 of Bram Stoker’s classic, and arguably the world’s most famous gothic novel, Dracula. Filmmakers have played their part in cultivating the myth—from Nosferatu in 1922 to more recent Hollywood blockbusters. All have helped ingrain the vampire persona in modern culture. Symptoms of photosensitivity, insomnia, agitation, aversion to garlic, hydrophobia—could the origins of the vampire persona be embedded in medical roots?

In our commentary piece, the authors have highlighted in a thought-provoking article, the similarities between the personality and physical traits of the vampire and three rare medical conditions—pellagra, porphyria and rabies. Could the original vampire myth be partly explained by medical roots?

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References