



## IRA E-BULLETIN : ISSUE 2 | APRIL 2020

### HISTORICAL ANECDOTES

Can you identify which autoimmune disease a person is probably suffering from in this 252 years old famous painting??



**An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump is an 1768 oil-on-canvas painting by Joseph Wright of Derby (Image courtesy: Wikipedia)**

#### What is the painting all about?

The painting regarded as a British masterpiece depicts a scientist recreating Robert Boyle's air pump experiment, in which a bird is deprived of air. The painting for the first time depicted scientific subjects in a reverential manner, which was previously reserved for scenes of religious and historical significance.



**I am sure all of you must have got it!! Not yet?**

Close observation of the man standing behind the two little girls and you can see erythematous rash over the face and knuckles of fingers (Gottron's sign), probably suggestive of dermatomyositis. Gottron's sign was first described by German dermatologist Heinrich Adolf Gottron in 1931, some 163 years after Wright's depiction in "The Air Pump."



The first detailed description of muscle disease with skin lesions was reported by E. Wagner in 1863. The name to this disorder as **Dermatomyositis** was however given by German internist Professor Hans Unverricht in 1891.

He reported a 27-year-old stonemason who developed acute onset weakness, pain, and stiffness in proximal upper and lower limbs along by diffuse swelling of face and extremities. Low-grade fever and a bluish rash developed over his eyelids a week later. Subsequently, he developed breathlessness and dysphagia. He died several weeks later with respiratory failure. His autopsy showed fluid filled lungs and swollen proximal muscles.

#### **Some other historical landmarks:**

The association of malignancy with dermatomyositis was first described in 1916 when 2 patients with gastric cancer & breast cancer were reported.

Hecht reported the first cases of juvenile dermatomyositis in the 1940s.

In 1977, Peter & Bohan defined diagnostic criteria for inflammatory myositis that are used to date.

The term amyopathic dermatomyositis was introduced by Pearson in 1979.

## References:

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