

(pp. 615–616) consider the drivers of out-of-area placements, recommending that population-serving services working with community assets must reduce both the length of in-patient stays and the rate of referral to specialist in-patient care. A more effective population-based system of care pathways that relies less on compulsory treatment is sorely needed. One approach to tackle the demands on specialist mental health services is to reinforce preventive and treatment services in primary care; this should reduce stigma, and improve access given most people are in receipt of primary care on a regular basis. Grigoroglou *et al* (pp. 600–608) show that a national primary care pay-for-performance scheme was not effective at reducing the incidence of suicide, although social fragmentation, deprivation and rural areas were of concern as important correlates of suicide. Some groups are less able or likely to receive regular primary care: rough sleepers and street homeless people, those living in temporary accommodation, those leaving care institutions or prisons, and people facing residential instability because of poverty, unemployment or when seeking asylum and refugee status. The voices of hidden groups need foregrounding to expose systems failures, remedying which may benefit entire populations and enable a more sustainable system of mental healthcare for all. The solutions lie in wider reform of geopolitical, cultural and societal structures as well as public and specialist health systems.^{5,12}

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psychiatry in history

Richard Morton and anorexia nervosa

Greg Wilkinson

‘Like a Skeleton only clad with skin’

Richard Morton, an English physician, writing in Latin in 1689, is usually credited with the first description of anorexia nervosa. Morton’s ‘*A Treatise of Conjunctions*’ is best known for his contribution to the solution of tuberculosis. Less well-known is that chapter 1 is entitled ‘*Of a Nervous Conjunction*’. Morton provides a case history (original spelling has been retained).

Mr Duke’s Daughter in St. Mary Axe, in the Year 1684 and the Eighteenth Year of her Age, in the Month of July fell into a total suppression of her Monthly Courses from a multitude of Cares and Passions of her Mind, but without any Symptom of the Green-Sickness following upon it. From which time her Appetite began to abate, and her Digestion to be bad; her Flesh also began to be flaccid and loose, and her looks pale, with other Symptoms usual in an Universal Consumption of the Habit of the Body, and by the extrem and memorable cold Weather which happened the Winter following, this Consumption did seem to be not a little improved; for that she was wont by her studying at Night, and continual poring upon Books, to expose her self both Day and Night to the injuries of the Air, which was at that time extremely cold, not without some manifest Prejudice to the System of her Nerves. The Spring following, by the Prescription of some Emperick, she took a Vomit, and after that I know not what Steel Medicines, but without any Advantage. So from that time loathing all sorts of Medicaments, she wholly neglected the care of her self for two full Years, till at last being brought to the last degree of a *Marasmus*, or Consumption, and thereupon subject to frequent Fainting Fits, she apply’d her self to me for Advice.

I do not remember that I did ever in all my Practice see one, that was conversant with the Living so much wasted with the greatest degree of a Consumption, (like a Skeleton only clad with skin) yet there was no Fever, but on the contrary a coldness of the whole Body; no Cough, or difficulty of Breathing, nor an appearance of any other Distemper of the Lungs, or of any other Entrail: No Lowness, or any other sign of a Colliquation, or Preternatural expence of the Nutritious Juices. Only her Appetite was diminished, and her Digestion unequal, with Fainting Fits, which did frequently return upon her. Which Symptoms I did endeavour to relieve by the outward application of *Aromatick* Bags made to the region of the Stomack, and by *Stomack-Plasters*, as also by the internal use of *bitter* Medicines, *Chalybeates*, and Juleps made of *Cephalick* and *Antihysterick Waters*, sufficiently impregnated with *Spirit of Salt Armoniack*, and *Tincture of Cajator*, and other things of that Nature. Upon the use of which she seemed to be much better, but being quickly tired with Medicines, she beg’d that the whole Affair might be committed again to Nature, whereupon consuming every day more and more, she was after three Months taken with a Fainting Fit, and dyed.

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