

Gout: Une Episode Non Ordinaire

I recall reading sometime ago an observation that an attack of gout can be precipitated by emotional factors. I think such an event happened to me recently. Over the past 40 years I have had 10-12 attacks of gout. The first two were in my knees but the rest were in my left Great Toe. The literature describes attacks as usually coming on a few hours after eating food high in purines (shellfish, organ meats). They commence around three a.m., in a toe and brought under control within an hour by Indocin. Then to keep the pain from returning one takes Indocin 25 mg four times a day for the next two days. This was certainly the course my previous attacks had taken. However my most recent one was entirely different. I had not taken any purine-laden food.

We had been to an afternoon opera of Madama Butterfly. I went to bed about 7 p.m. I woke up at nine with severe gouty pain in my fourth left toe! I took 50 mg of Indocin which has usually subdued the pain after 30-45 minutes. Because of the unusual time and location and intensity I also took a Percocet. An hour later I took a Vicodin. Still no relief. So at 11 pm I repeated the Indocin and Percocet. The pain stopped in the next hour. And it required no further medication!

At the end of the opera I was feeling weepy: very unusual for me. My hypothesis is that the unusual emotion had triggered the attack and was responsible for the unusual time of onset and duration.

In the past there were episodes not related to diet, but they were usually of the routine type. I think it is worth observing that unusual episodes can occur.

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