

for more. He was surprised that many words dealing with different aspects of sex weren't listed in either Roget's or Webster's. Like any true scientist, he decided to investigate.

He and his friend and assistant, Web-site designer Jennifer Kelly, scoured books on sexual and modern slang, surveyed friends and checked out some counter-culture groups, including those for gays and people with fetishes. "Certain oppressed groups have a whole language," says Peterkin. Transsexuals, for example, are gender benders, while a bisexual is a gate-swinger or Yo-Yo. "Originally it was a hidden lingo, but now it's in the mainstream."

They found lots of derogatory words, with the most degrading ones usually referring to women. A prostitute, for instance, may be called a MasterCard Mary, nymph of the pavement, painted cat or weekend warrior. "But women are beginning to get their revenge," says Peterkin. "The term 'buns' is definitely a female invention." Undoubtedly some of the synonyms for testicles, including jingleberries and mountain oysters, are as well.

They also discovered regional variations. For instance, residents of Los Angeles have developed several dozen synonyms for breast implants. "It's a rare, rich and evolving language," Peterkin says.

Why are there so many synonyms for these words? "When you can't name something in an open way, many side words appear," explains Peterkin, "and often they are inventive and playful." To copulate, for example, may be to "introduce Charley." A pregnant woman has "an Irish toothache."

Beware, though, because you'll be in deep hot water if you try some of these in a Scrabble game with the in-laws. Consider these excerpts from the dictionary.

**Condom** — *American sock, baggie,*

*body stocking, condominium, diving suit, French letter, French tickler, Glad bag, lettre Anglaise, life jacket, life preserver, life saver, love glove, Manhattan eel, muffler, muzzle, nightcap, overcoat, party hat, party pack, pecker pack, plumber's helper, Port Said garter, prophylactic, protection, raincoat, rozzer, rubber, rubber boot, rubber duck, rubber johnny, rubber sock, sack, safe, shag bag, sheath, shower-cap, skin, slicker, snake skin, squeegee, wetsuit, weiner wrap, willie-wellie*

**Breast** — *apple dumplings, baloobas, bazongas, begonias, berks, bikini stuffers, bulbs, butter-bags, cantaloupes, Charlies, che ches, garbonzos, Mae Wests, maracas, the warmest valley*

From *The Bald-Headed Hermit and The Artichoke: An Erotic The-saurus* by A.D. Peterkin, to be published next spring by Arsenal Pulp Press, Vancouver ([www.arsenalpulp.com](http://www.arsenalpulp.com), 604 687-4233) — *Barbara Sibbald*



## Keeping things in proportion

A seminal Canadian study, described by the researcher involved as earth-shattering — "the kind of research that the world has been waiting for" — has found that the length of men's penises is only minutely correlated with their height or shoe size (*Ann Sex Res* 1993;6:231-5). As the

paper states, "Height and foot size would not serve as practical estimators of penis length."

Although the study is now 5 years old, it recently came to public attention after it earned a 1998 Ig Nobel Prize for research "that cannot and should not be reproduced." The Ig Nobels are awarded annually at Harvard University by the *Annals of Improbable Research*. They are designed to promote interest and humour in science, and are handed out by Nobel Prize laureates.

Dr. Jerald Bain of Toronto, the study's coauthor, explains that he was inspired to conduct the research after his mother-in-law looked down at his feet and said, "My, what small feet Jerry has." (He admits to a shoe size of 7 1/2 or 8, depending on the shoe.) When Bain's wife countered with "So what?", her mother went on to state the old adage about small feet.

Bain took his umbrage to unusual lengths. With a coauthor, Dr. Kerry Siminoski of Edmonton, Bain studied the vital statistics of 63 men of normal virility who ranged in age from 27 to 71 years. He took down shoe size and measured height and stretched penile length at rest (mean 9.4 cm, range 6.6 to 12.2 cm). "In my office, measuring penis length is not unusual," Bain explains. "I'm a reproductive endocrinologist."

A linear-regression analysis showed that there was a statistically significant correlation between height and penis length, and between foot length and penis length. However, the coefficient is so small that an observer could not reliably reach any conclusions about one from the other.

"The size of bodily parts are in general related to each other," allows Bain. "But if women want to know a man's endowment, it would be erroneous to estimate this from foot size and height."

In any case, he describes erection as “the great equalizer. When you compare men with shorter penises with men who have longer penises, the percentage of elongation to produce an erection is greater for those with shorter penises. This should be a source of reassurance to women . . . and to men.”

Bain’s study confirms abundant field research in this area, most of which has involved nonrandomized case series, anecdotal reporting and decidedly unscientific methodology.

— *C.J. Brown*

## Tool Time for MDs

Most physicians have heard a tale or 2 about a colleague who used a Black and Decker drill to relieve an epidural bleed in a patient’s skull. This is not mere legend, a recent article in the *Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine* points out (3;1998:225-7). An article, “The occasional burr hole,” looks at Canadian Tire-type

surgery and provides step-by-step instructions á la Bob Villa on how to drill a hole in the cranium.

Dr. Keith MacLellan advocates a sense of historical perspective. “Drilling a hole in the head is just the boring (sorry) start to most neurosurgical days,” he writes. “Trehpination was practised safely in the Stone Age. So relax.”

First, you need the equipment: a sharp-pointed drill (penetrator) to make a hole in the outer table of the cranium and a blunt-ended burr hole bit to complete the drilling through the skull and minimize the chance of penetrating the dura.

If the drill and 2 bits aren’t available in your hospital, head for the local hardware store. MacLellan found what he was looking for at Canadian Tire: the 1/2-inch, high speel steel drill bit (catalogue # 54-3032-8) cost him \$8.49. Amazingly, the bit instantly morphed into a medical instrument when he brought it to the hospital. If sup-

plies are really limited, the entire process can be carefully done with a penetrator and carpenter’s drill.

Not only is the equipment effective, it’s also a money-saver — hospital administrators take note.



Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine

**Resourceful physicians can use a penetrator from Canadian Tire and complete the job with a surgical burr-hole bit.**

**CODED LANGUAGE AND MEDICAL OBITUARIES** — *What they write (and what they mean): character (a tiresome old man); perfectionist (an obsessional neurotic); assertive (a bully); plainspoken (offensive); did not suffer fools gladly (very offensive); a man of strong opinions (a bigot); charming (dim, but smiled a lot); fond of the good things of life (a drunk).*

— *From A Sceptic’s Medical Dictionary by Michael O’Donnell, BMJ Publishing Group, London (available through the CMA Member Service Centre, 888 855-2555).*