



Regarding the ‘Phytophotodermatitis caused by contact with a fig tree (*Ficus carica*)’ case report

It is difficult to see how a phytophotodermatitis could be “pathopneumonic”, given the inability of light to reach the lungs, and, indeed, there appears to be no other respiratory reference in the case report by Derraik and Rademaker on the perils of embracing fig branches.¹

Could it be that the combination of an errant spell-check and inadequate proof-reading converted an intended “pathognomonic” to “pathopneumonic”?

Tony E J Fitchett
General Practitioner
Morningside Health Centre
Dunedin

Reference:

1. Derraik GB, Rademaker M. Phytophotodermatitis caused by contact with a fig tree (*Ficus carica*). N Z Med J. 2007;120(1259). <http://www.nzma.org.nz/journal/120-1259/2658>

Response

Indeed Dr Fitchett is quite correct. Although a number of medical articles incorrectly use 'pathopneumonic' or 'pathoneumonic' (as we have just done in the referred piece!), the proper spelling is indeed "pathognomonic", even though the etymology of the word is still unclear (as per the Oxford English Dictionary).

Our apologies for the mistake.

José G B Derraik
Senior Adviser (Human Health)
MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Wellington

Marius Rademaker
Hon Associate Professor
Department of Dermatology, Waikato Hospital
Hamilton

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