

On the History of Angioedema (From Donato to Strübing): A Journey for Three Centuries

*“What’s in a name? that which we
call a rose*

By any other name would smell as sweet.

William Shakespeare (Romeo and Juliet,
Act II, Scene II).

Introduction

The beloved, not the name, may be all important to a lady in love about the man she adores. But when it comes to a disease that took about three centuries to attain a specific name becomes an interesting story in the arena of medical history. Here is a small article on the history and evolution of how an unnamed swelling occurring to skin and mucous membrane transformed into “angioneurotic edema.”

The Early Days

Marcello Donato (1538–1607) was the first physician to deliver a clear description of angioedema in his book *De medicahistoriamrabili libri sex* [Figure 1] in 1586 about a young man who developed the disease after consuming an egg. The next report came from Franz Anton Mai (1742–1806) in his book *Stolpertus, einjunger Artz am Krankenbette* (1777) illustrating a picture of a man of 62 developing a progressive swelling of lips that gradually involved the larynx. The next important and vivid account came from Robert James Graves (1796–1853) who noted: “...sometimes the lips, inside of the mouth, palate, and uvula are attacked giving rise to a very considerable inconvenience.”^[1]

The Giant Urticaria

It was John Laws Milton (1820–1898), the senior surgeon to St. John’s Hospital for diseases of the skin, who published “On

giant urticaria” in the sixth issue of volume 22 of the *Edinburg Medical Journal* in 1876 and subsequently as a 28-page book from London in 1878 that gave a description of a condition about “swelling attacking the skin.” Milton commented that the condition was unknown to the contemporary physicians and described about four patients with this kind of ailment.^[2]

The Story of “Two Theses”

Eugen Dinkelacker, a doctoral student of Heinrich Ireaenus Quincke (1842–1922) [Figure 2], collected and presented 14 cases as dissertation to the Kiel’s Christian-Albrechts University for doctoral degree. Quincke published a case series in 1882 with similar disorders and the condition was eponymously termed “Quincke’s oedema” by Felix Mendel in 1902, but it was assumed that he (Quincke) must have been conscious about his pupil’s cases. Bannister of Chicago published a case in *Chicago Medical Review* in 1880 and referring to this along with other case reports including that by Milton, protested against the naming of the condition erroneously on the name of Quincke.^[3] Subsequently, Bannister’s name was also attached to the condition by some American authors leading to the development of “Bannister’s disease.”^[1,4]

Old Disease, New Name

Be it Quincke’s edema or Bannister’s disease, the condition attracted many medical researchers. Paul Strübing (1852–1915) was of opinion regarding an underlying relation between nervous system and edema formation mechanism and finally named the condition as *angioneurotic oedema* in 1885 ... almost three centuries after Donato’s first

**Amiya Kumar
Mukhopadhyay**

“Pranab”, Ismile, Asansol,
West Bengal, India

Address for correspondence:
Dr. Amiya Kumar Mukhopadhyay,
“Pranab”, Ismile
(Near Dharmaraj Mandir),
Asansol - 713 301, West Bengal,
India.
E-mail: amiya64@gmail.com

Access this article online

Website: www.idoj.in

DOI: 10.4103/idoj.IDOJ_410_18

Quick Response Code:



How to cite this article: Mukhopadhyay AK. On the history of angioedema (From Donato to Strübing): A journey for three centuries. *Indian Dermatol Online J* 2019;10:363-4.

Received: October, 2018. **Accepted:** December, 2018.

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

For reprints contact: reprints@medknow.com

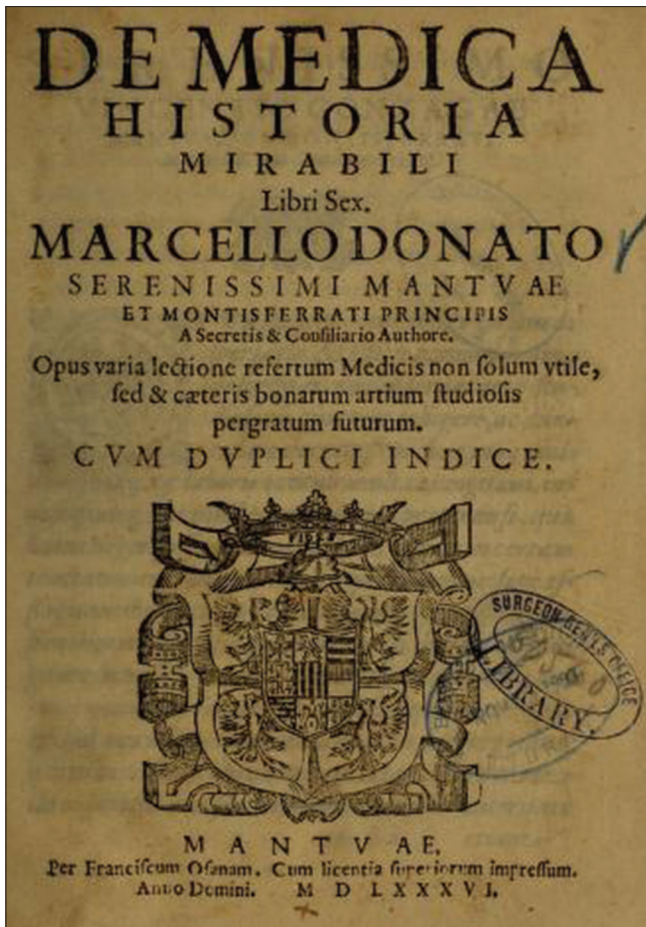


Figure 1: The title page of *De Medica Historia libri Sex* by Marcello Donato (1586). (Credit: www.archive.org)

description. William Osler (1850–1920) identified the familial form of this disorder in 1888. Thus, an “orphan disease” received a name, and in recent years, further research led to a clearer view regarding the etiopathology as well as management of this uncommon but grave condition.^[4]

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.



Figure 2: Heinrich Irenaeus Quincke (1842–1922) (Credit: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Heinrich_Quincke.jpg, Accessed on October 29, 2018)

References

1. Reshef A, Kidon M, Leibovich I. The story of angioedema: From Quincke to bradykinin. *Clinic Rev Allerg Immunol* 2016;51:121-39.
2. Milton JL. *On Giant Urticaria*. London: Harrison and Sons; 1878.
3. Bannister HM. Acute angioneurotic oedema. *J Nerv Ment Dis* 1894;21:627.
4. Rook A. The historical background. In: Warin RP, Champion RH, editors. *Urticaria*. London: W.B. Saunders Company Ltd; 1974.p. 1-9.