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Antimongoloid as a pejorative term

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To the Editor: As someone with an interest in case reports (1-3), I read your editorial regarding the comeback of the case report with great interest (4). The three case reports that you published (5-7) are a great read. The case report by Nosan et al (6) mentions an "antimongoloid palpebral slant," which is a term with pejorative connotations (8,9). A more informative and appropriate term would be downward-slanting palpebral fissures (10). One can only hope that with time inappropriate terms will disappear from medical discourse save for historical mention and medical journals should play a very important part in discouraging their use (11).

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In Reply: We agree that “antimongoloid palpebral slant” is a pejorative term, although it has been used by some contemporary authors for describing different syndromes (1-4). When a word enters our everyday practice it is sometimes difficult to replace it with a new, more technical and appropriate term. We are grateful for the comment (5) and wholeheartedly encourage the use of proper terminology, especially in scientific articles.

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In Reply: The editorial team of the *Croatian Medical Journal* wishes to express regret about inappropriate selection of terms in the case report by Nosan et al (1). We welcome the discussion and agree with Dr Masukume that the use of pejorative terms, including “antimongoloid” should be abandoned (2). We have also given the authors of the case report an opportunity to respond and express their opinion on this matter (3). From authors to publishers, all parties included in the scientific production should have their role in changing such practice. Using Down syndrome as an example, history shows us that usage of pejorative terms in scholarly articles can be altered for the better (4). The inappropriate term usage from the last issue of the *CMJ* reminds us that our ethical standards are in need of perpetual refinement, not only due to technological advancement, but also due to wider social and cultural changes. Although at first glance it may seem as a “technical” issue, it is not by chance that fellow authors point to the fact that there could be more to term usage than simple denomination, and propose changes to already established terms (5). In the words of the great Boris Pasternak “...to call each thing by its right name” has a value in itself. It is thus our moral obligation to constantly remind of and take action against inappropriate usage of discriminative and politically incorrect terms.

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