

# A caveat for thrombolytic treatment of stroke?

Sir,

The stroke-like presentation of tuberculosis (vol 74(6), 2013, p. 353) has parallels with the stroke-like presentation of infective endocarditis, both disorders being examples of infection with potential multisystem involvement. Both in tuberculosis (Javaud et al, 2011) and in infective endocarditis (Weissler et al, 2010), stroke may be the initial manifestation, mandating a high index of suspicion in the modern era where the majority of stroke patients are 'fast tracked' to thrombolysis, the latter yet untested in these two subtypes of ischaemic stroke.

In the event that both CNS tuberculosis and infective endocarditis are in the differential diagnosis it should also be recognized that CSF stigmata of the two disorders may be identical (Koh et al, 2007; Weissler et al, 2010).

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Javaud N, Certal Rda S, Stirnemann J et al (2011) Tuberculous vasculitis: Retrospective study of 10 cases. *Eur J Intern Med* 22: e99-104  
Koh S-B, Kim B-J, Park MH et al (2007) Clinical and laboratory characteristics of cerebral infarction in tuberculous meningitis: A comparative study. *J Clin Neurosci* 14: 1073-7  
Weissler A, Perl L, Neuman Y, Mekori YA, Mor A (2010) Neurologic manifestations as presenting symptoms of endocarditis. *Isr Med Assoc J* 12: 472-6

# Virtual technology can serve to assist diagnosis

Sir,

On 15 July 2013, the BBC broadcast 'Broken by Battle', a documentary focusing on soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and risk of suicide following their time in Afghanistan (Panorama, 2013).

What was clear was that the rate of post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide

was and still is significantly higher than that predicted by the Ministry of Defence. In addition, soldiers who were seeking medical help on the basis of their mental health were being followed up intermittently, if at all.

In America, they recognize the seriousness of this concern. The University of Southern California School of Social Work, alongside the Department of Defense, helps veterans deal with post-traumatic stress disorder by bringing them back to the source through virtual tech-

nology, allowing them to confront their memories in the hope of a more rapid recovery (USCSocialWork, 2010). In addition, clinicians are able to use such technology as a training tool and through the use of virtual patients can enhance their interpersonal skills in order to help them effectively diagnose and manage such cases.

Exposure to the occurrence of post-traumatic stress disorder after more than a decade of war was certainly misjudged here in the UK. The Ministry of Defence has stated that 5% of British troops who served in Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, with 20% of American troops suffering from the same condition (Panorama, 2013). Surely such technology should therefore be explored here in the UK to help relieve such a notable mismatch.

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Panorama (2013) Broken by Battle. www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b0377vnc/Panorama\_Broken\_by\_Battle/ (accessed 17 July 2013)  
USCSocialWork (2010) Virtual Technology to Treat PTSD Presented at Council on Social Work Education Conference. www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMecpz-qKwY (accessed 17 July 2013)

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