GUEST EDITORIAL

Gulliver's Travels: Bariatric Travails

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QUINTESSENTIAL PROSE

Lemuel Gulliver is the hero of the famed Irish writer Jonathan Swift's novel Gulliver's Travels. In this satire, the surgeon Gulliver travels to four different lands, where he experiences various facets of human nature. He returns home disillusioned, preferring the company of horses to that of men[1]. Written exactly 300 years ago (in 1726), the book retains rationale, reason, and relevance for the modern reader. We use Gulliver's Travels as an allegory, to describe the experience that persons living with obesity face today.

THE MEN WHO MISGUIDE

The Little Ones

Gulliver finds himself shipwrecked on Lilliput, and island populated by diminutive people with a shallow thinking process. The Lilliputians engage in petty quarrels, and find whimsical reasons to fight or prosecute others. A similar situation awaits the individual who begins to seek care for his weight. Not knowing the right specialist to approach, he or she reaches out to other stakeholders. More often than not, these are not educated or experienced in obesity medicine. This results in a barrage of misinformation and disinformation, leads to inaccurate opinions and beliefs, and promotes inappropriate attitudes, behaviors, and choices. The dalliance with alternative health providers, influencers, and social media celebrities is usually short-lived, however. Sooner or later, the individual begins to understand the shortcomings of self-styled "obesity specialists". This is similar to what happens with Gulliver, who goes out of favor with the Lilliputians when he declines to take part in their unethical war against the neighboring island of Blefuscu.

The Giants

Gulliver's next trip is to Brobdingnag, an island populated by tall giants. These people are welcoming in nature, but have an irrational dislike for Europe, and all things European. They engage in endless criticism of modern science, and do not accept Gulliver's defense of his homeland. Persons living with obesity also face Brobdingnagian experts of modern medicine. These are doctors who are qualified in fields other than obesity, but misuse their eminence to project themselves as obesity experts. While this eloquence is unquestionable, their expertise and experience remain questionable. Such followers of Brobdingnag should stick to their field of expertise. This is the minimum etiquette that is expected from them.

The Esoterics

Gulliver's third travel takes him to airborne Laputa, where the inhabitants rule over the island of Balnibarbi. The citizens of Laputa are fond of esoteric and impractical "pseudoscientific" principles, and invest heavily in such research. On the other hand, they neglect practical and pragmatic practices which can easily improve their quality of life. Persons living with obesity may find themselves a prey of evidence-based science. The most ubiquitous example of this is the science of stenophagous (or restricted) diets (such as keto diet, time restricted eating, nutrient-deficiency diets, and very low-calorie diets) and our schools of alternative medicine. Persons who propagate such treatments, and those who follow them, remain oblivious to the wholesome benefits of a 500-cal deficient euryphagous (one with wide dietary diversity) cuisine. Doctors who follow the Laputanoid philosophy are prone to arguing about nano-sized nuances of theory, while neglecting real-life necessities and niceties of persons seeking obesity care.

THE HORSES OF HEALTH

After another shipwreck, Swift's hero finds himself in the land of Houyhnhnms. Here, talking horses coexist with a not-so-good humanoid race known as the yahoos. Gulliver enjoys the company of sensible and sagacious horses. This happy phase of life is what the person living with obesity experiences while in the

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Gulliver's place of travel	Jonathan Swift's description	Bariatric challenges	Contemporary lessons
Lilliput	Diminutive thought process	Misleading information as shared by influencers on social media	Stay updated with current developments
Brobdingnag	Closed through process	Collaboration between Barocinologists and other specialties	Open thought process: accept new science
Laputa	Pseudoscientific through process	Fad diets "Pseudobariatrics"	Follow rational, evidence-based, science
Land of Houyhnhnms	Humble grounded thought process	Evidence-based bariatric care	Practice person-centered care as part of the team

hands of a qualified obesity medicine specialist. Various external as well as internal mood and motivational disruptors however, combine and coalesce to make weight management a challenging affair. It is not easy to achieve clinically meaningful weight loss, and it is even more difficult to maintain achieved body mass.

LESSONS LEARNT

The book Gulliver's Travels serves as metaphor for each and all of us on the weight management Journey. We can easily identify with some phase or the other of Gulliver's travails. This is applicable for persons living with obesity, their caregivers, and their health care professionals as well.

OBSTACLES AND ODDITIES

As persons fighting obesity, we feel shipwrecked and marooned; we search for support to reduce weight, and try to find barobuddies. If we get caught in a cobweb of Lilliputian quibbles and squabbles, we may end up with a self-defeating condition like eating disorders, orthorexia nervosa, or obesity associated stress, instead of achieving desired weight goals. If we escape this trap, "larger than life", or Brobdingnagian boulders and barriers await us. These are in the form of "pseudo bariatric" specialist celebrities, who advertise the sun and stars, without science or substance. A similar challenge occurs with the Laputanoid legions of health care providers.

GULLIVER AND THE KIDNEY QUANDARY

During his journeys, Gulliver frequently encountered burdens greater than life. For individuals with obesity, the kidneys bear a Brobdingnagian strain. The kidneys display glomerular hyperfiltration, glomerulomegaly, lipotoxicity, and eventually, obesity-related glomerulopathy[2]. Just as Gulliver sought relief from the overwhelming giants, the kidneys struggle in getting disburdened from the triad of hypertension, diabetes, and metabolic disorders. Even though renal barocrinology is constantly evolving, new challenges like renal stones and oxalate nephropathy keep reminding us of the crucial need for continuous vigilance throughout the journey.

FROM GLOOM TO GAIETY

It may take multiple "shipwrecks", or trial and error, to reach the right obesity care professional. More often than not, such a professional will be humble and humane, honest and hard working, with qualities of equine nature. He or she will be a faithful and trusted companion in one's journey of weight management; his or her main aim will be to give the rider, i.e., the persons living with obesity, a smooth and comfortable journey, in a sensitive and compassionate manner. These may be an occasional stumble, an unexpected stoppage. The Yahoos of Houyhnhnms will always try to create mistrust through miscommunication; this is best handled by ensuring unbreakable bonds between the person and his or her bariatric physician.

Gulliver does not have a very happy ending in his novel. He returns to his village, become a recluse of sorts, and prefers the company of horses to men. This is not the ideal outcome for person living with obesity. One should be able to manage weight while living in one's natural environment, and while handling the pressures, palls, and pushes of people around us. One must build resilience through resourcefulness, and ensure firmness of purpose through friends and family. Navigating Gulliver's Travels helps us do the same in our journey with obesity.

DISCLOSURE AND DISCLAIMER

We do not wish to offend or antagonize any reader. Reading Gulliver's Travels and writing this pseudo-satirical editorial has actually helped us introspect, and improve our insight regarding our work. We now feel that we are more self-aware of our internal biases and limitations. We are able to identify sapiopsychic issues in and our

patients, and address them effectively efficiency. We also feel that Jonathan Swift, through Gulliver, has assisted us in becoming better human beings, and better at navigating our own journey with obesity and overweight along with that of our patients.

We wish our readers the best, in their happy journey towards health for all.

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