The unique clinical features of the idiopathic AA type amyloidosis presented here would indicate that the tissue affinity of the amyloid is different from that of ordinary AA type and so are its biochemical properties. Study of similar cases, together with biochemical analysis of the amyloid, should clarify where this particular case stands in the broad spectrum of amyloidosis.

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Bontius and Tulp on beriberi polyneuropathy

In chapter 5 of his *Observationes medicae*, Nicolaus Tulp, stimulated perhaps by his teacher Jacobus Bontius,¹ describes the beriberi of the East Indies.² Bontius had served as a doctor in Batavia in 1627. His precise observations give the first recognisable picture of polyneuropathy (see also ³):

... a kind of paralysis, or rather tremor; for it penetrates the motions and sensations of the hands and feet, indeed sometimes of the whole body ... movement and sensation particularly of the hands and feet are depraved, and they are weak; and in them is felt very often a tickling.

Unfairly judged by the modern genre, Tulp's punctuation is almost as idiosyncratic as his treatment, which the patient survived, perhaps because of his mother's good food.

Joost de Vogelaar, a youth fond of travelling, at that time in a particular part of the orient, was however in the region of Chloromandel, where the Sun sometimes burned so hotly that the natives sought to escape it, ... this youth to shun such consuming heat, put himself on deck every day under the sky in the air ... they (his servants) bathed him with lots of cold water ... the youth became sick, he had no power to control by his mind, obstipation as well as fluid in the skin, and the inordinate cold, repercussing excessively in the nerves produced that species of paralysis which is called in India Beriberi, or ovem (sheep).

Tulp inquired into the nature of the disease when his patient returned home:

For it fits in with a partial paralysis, his body was

certainly drowsy and languid, and his limbs inert, and inactive, however by no means destitute of motion altogether and albeit sick he was little by little restored to health, gradually taking to food, not only to walk about, but he was permitted to sit in a chair to perform some slight movement, indeed in his dull limbs, now and then a movement was detected, and then that wandering sense of tickling which is accustomed to precede the flowing of animal spirits into the nerves ... the patient regained his health by the familiar methods of his country and, since the treatment should have been by those very things prescribed specially for this disease from the Chief of the Indies to the Doctors ... precious oil of the earth which is called Miniac Tennah Indis; and in the Island of Sumatra a trial of this Indian oil is made by us now in chilly disorders of the nerves and deep seated in the muscles.

Additional medication commended included:

... cathartics, then Guaiac wood, sassafras and China root and externally an ointment partly from petroleum, partly indeed of castor oil, of wax, of the seeds of myristica, of cloves, of peppermint, and of rosewood ... and by the use of all these things, not however constantly, in this manner he was restored to a condition of perfect health.

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See also p.625