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Lucja Frey and the "Auriculo—temporal syndrome"

Frey's syndrome¹—reflex salivation with sweating and flushing over half of the face—is commonly the result of damage to the peripheral facial nerve by parotitis, surgery or trauma. The abnormal sweating is provoked by strong tastes and spices. Rarely, it appears spontaneously without evident pathology.²

Burton and Brochwicz-Lewinski have recently shed light on Lucja Frey and her work.³ Born in Lwow, Eastern Poland, she graduated in philosophy and mathematics before reading medicine at Lwow University. She later became senior assistant in neurology at Warsaw (1921-28) with Professor Kazimierz Orzechowski. Described as: "modest, quiet, and as hard-working as an ant, she was distinguished to no mean extent by innovative creativity . . .".

In addition to her description of gustatory sweating she published several papers in Polish, with works on brain topography, the anatomical changes in Charcot joints, and a case of aneurysm of the plexus of the medulla.

She died at the hands of the Nazis in 1943.

Though known as Frey's syndrome, earlier descriptions were written by Lipsztat "A case of localised sweating while eating in 1922" (no further reference available).⁴ But the earliest account may be that of Dupheniz in 1757 in a paper on fistulas of Stenson's duct.⁵

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