

identified a history of recent headache (within seven days) as a risk factor for post-LP HA.<sup>4</sup> Many patients must wait several weeks to schedule a spinal tap, and most studies require advanced planning. Therefore, a positive history of chronic headache may prove more useful in predicting post-LP HA. This information will also help to simplify the design of long term prophylactic treatment trials.

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## NEUROLOGICAL STAMP

### Karl Rokitansky (1804-78)

Rokitansky was a Czech who studied philosophy at the University of Prague and later moved to Vienna to study medicine. He was one of the greatest of the gross descriptive pathologists and was able to base his lifelong study of disease on more than 30 000 necropsies personally performed over 40 years. Rokitansky was professor of pathology in Vienna for 30 years from 1844 and was one of the chief founders of the new Vienna School. His *Handbuch der pathologischen Anatomie (1842-46)* was based on many thousands of necropsies. Among his special contributions were treatise on diseases of the arteries and defects of the heart. He was the first to detect bacteria in the lesions of malignant endocarditis. Other contributions include studies on goitre, acute yellow atrophy of the liver (also known as Rokitansky's disease), polycystic tumour of the ovaries, acute dilatation of the stomach, and perforating gastric ulcer and he recognised the association of intracranial lesions with erosions of the gastric mucosa. He also described spondylolisthesis and spondylitic deformity of the spine. At first he was an adherent of the humoral theory of disease but was bitterly opposed by Virchow, the founder of modern cellular pathology. Later Rokitansky accepted Virchow's view.

He was a genial and witty man. Of his four sons, two became physicians and the other two concert singers which led him to remark that they were of two classes, the healers and howlers: *Die Einen heilen, die Anderen heulen*.



He was honoured in the set of stamps issued by Austria in 1937 showing great doctors (Stanley Gibbons 817, Scott B158).

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