

DOES ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE REALLY EXIST?

F. Peng

Taipei Veterans General Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan

Background: Alzheimer's disease was proclaimed erroneously by Kraepelin in 1910. It has been taught to consist of two hallmarks at every medical school throughout the world. The error has persisted in the November 3, 2006 issue of *Science*. This article is presented here for a serious debate.

Objective: The purpose is to look into the pathological nature of the two hallmarks to determine their nosological status and why Alzheimer thought he discovered a new disease.

Methods: Publications were examined from a historical perspective. Through such an examination, who started the erroneous two hallmarks is identified and how the error has persisted to this date is revealed.

Results: Alzheimer did not treat Auguste whose dementia was not caused by the two "hallmarks". She had four brain diseases: (1) arteriosclerosis, (2) evenly atrophic brain, (3) miliary foci, and (4) strange substance. She also had DM and decubitus angina. The claim that AD consists of the two hallmarks is therefore a fallacy.

Conclusions: My conclusion is threefold: (1) AD never existed; Alzheimer and Perusini thought mistakenly that they "discovered" a new disease" because her conditions did not fit Kraepelin's dementia praecox; (2) it does not exist because subsequent cases all differed from Auguste by excluding vascular disorders; (3) it will never exist because AD was invented by Kraepelin, just like he had invented "dementia praecox", translated by Bleuler as schizophrenia. In fairness to Oskar Fischer, a different term must be called for, which is herewith proposed as Fischer's disease (FD) to replace AD.