

## *La maladie du petit papier*

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**H**ow many times have you experienced this? The waiting area is full. You enter the exam room where the patient sits comfortably and says, "I see you're really busy; I won't take up much of your time today, so I wrote down a few questions." Thus spake a healthy 55-year-old man yesterday as he extracted a lavender paper from his pocket (Fig 1).

"*La maladie du petit papier*," I thought wearily.

PubMed has only 5 references to this entity we all recognize.<sup>1-5</sup> The first, in Italian, dates back to 1967.<sup>1</sup> I suspect that most of us encounter these little lists on a daily basis. We each have our own way of handling them. Some docs grab the list from the patient and say, "Let's have a look at this." Others assert, "We can deal with only 3 questions today; you choose." I usually let the patient read all of them and then proceed.

A couple of years ago there was a piece in the *British Medical Journal* comparing the malady of the *petit papier* with a newly coined syndrome "la maladie du grand printout."<sup>6</sup> The latter, an emerging entity, may be more common in the major cities of North America than elsewhere. Be prepared; it is coming to your office soon.

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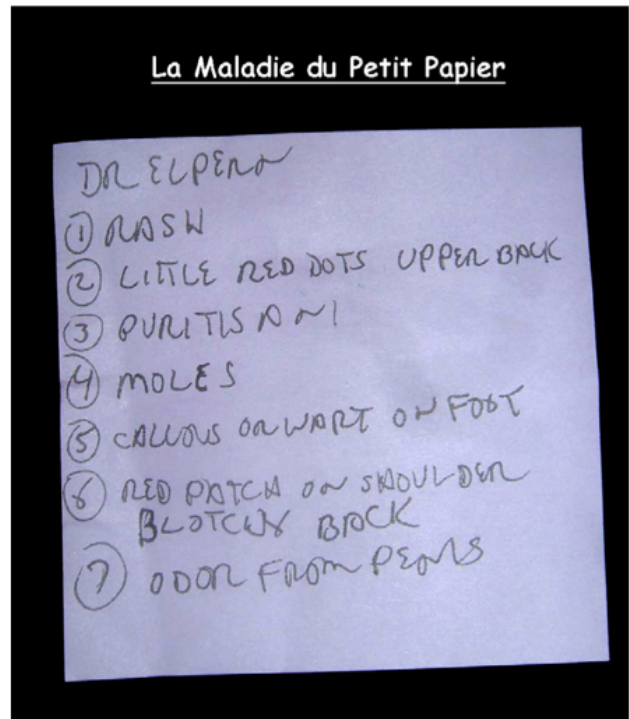


Fig 1. "Le petit papier."

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