

# Physician's Lexicon

## A Testimony To Virility

The testis (its diminutive is testicle) inherits names derived from classical Latin.

A *testum*, in Latin, defines a pot or earthen vessel or even a shell. Thus, the *Testacea* represent an order of invertebrates with hard shells. The Latin, *testamentum* means a covenant, a scriptural text or a declaration of one's intent or will (and thus to be testate is to have left a valid will; and intestate, on the other hand, defines one without a will). The Latin, *testis*, means a witness; and the English word, testify, defines one who bears witness. Related words, in English, include protest, protestant, detest and testimony.

The etymological relationship between testis, the organ, and testimony, the solemn witness to the truth, rests, argumentatively, upon an older custom

when testifying before a Roman court of law, that required the witness to grasp his genitals when swearing his oath of veracity.

The word, witness, on the other hand, is from Old English, *wit*, meaning endowed with knowledge and thus giving rise to such English words as wisdom, wizard, half-witted and witless (one without knowledge.)

The Greek root for the male genital organ is *orchis*. And thus the orchid has been so named because of the resemblance of its bulbous roots to the organ, testis. In keeping with medical nomenclatural tradition, the Greek term of an organ is employed in naming pathologic conditions or surgical interventions while the Latin counterpart, is used for anatomic designations. (Thus, inflammation of the testis is named orchitis and surgi-

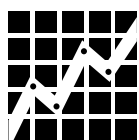
cal removal of the testis is called orchiectomy.)

The Aztec (Nahuatl) word for the alligator pear is *ahuacatl*, and also their word for the testis. This, in Spanish, became *aguacate* and then *avocado*, meaning the alligator pear and a synonym for the testis.

Epididymis represents the Greek prefix, *epi* – (meaning upon or over) and *didimus*, Greek meaning twin, referring to the twin nature of testes.

There are a number of English words that resemble the *orchi*- root but are derived from different, unrelated sources. Orchestra stems from a Greek word for dance and orchard from the Latin, *hortus*.

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## VITAL STATISTICS

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### Rhode Island Monthly Vital Statistics Report Provisional Occurrence Data from the Division of Vital Records

Underlying Cause of Death	Reporting Period			
	April 2009	12 Months Ending with April 2009		
	Number (a)	Number (a)	Rates (b)	YPLL (c)
Diseases of the Heart	213	2,444	232.6	3,065.0
Malignant Neoplasms	196	2,250	214.1	6,207.5
Cerebrovascular Diseases	29	403	38.4	687.0
Injuries (Accidents/Suicide/Homicide)	38	548	52.2	8,753.5
COPD	35	483	46.0	337.0

Vital Events	Reporting Period		
	October 2009	12 Months Ending with October 2009	
	Number	Number	Rates
Live Births	1,018	12,257	11.5*
Deaths	843	9,601	9.0*
Infant Deaths	(9)	(83)	6.8#
Neonatal Deaths	(7)	(65)	5.3#
Marriages	683	6,296	5.9*
Divorces	251	3,023	2.8*
Induced Terminations	352	4,258	347.4#
Spontaneous Fetal Deaths	26	735	60.0#
Under 20 weeks gestation	(19)	(654)	53.4#
20+ weeks gestation	(7)	(81)	6.6#

(a) Cause of death statistics were derived from the underlying cause of death reported by physicians on death certificates.

(b) Rates per 100,000 estimated population of 1,050,788

(c) Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL)

**Note:** Totals represent vital events which occurred in Rhode Island for the reporting periods listed above. Monthly provisional totals should be analyzed with caution because the numbers may be small and subject to seasonal variation.

\* Rates per 1,000 estimated population

# Rates per 1,000 live births