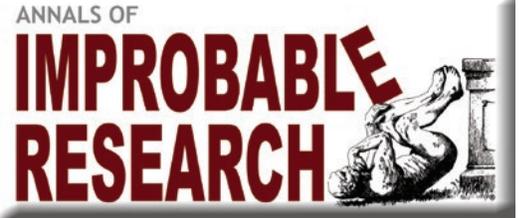


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The features marked with a star (\*) are based entirely on material taken straight from standard research (and other Official and Therefore Always Correct) literature. Many of the other articles are genuine, too, but we don't know which ones.



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### On the Front Cover

Miscellany in the basement storage facility in the Natural History Museum of Denmark, in Copenhagen. Photo: A.S. Kaswell.



### Some Coming Events



The Covid-19 pandemic has introduced excitingly boundless uncertainty as to whether, when, where, and how various public activities will happen in the near future. In 2021 most (but not all?) will happen teledistantly.



See [IMPROBABLE.COM](https://improbable.com) for details of these and other events:



#### September 9, 2021

The 31<sup>st</sup> First Annual Ig Nobel Prize Ceremony

2021 (Dates TBD, pandemic permitting)  
Ig Nobel EuroTour



2021 (Dates TBD, pandemic permitting)  
Japan

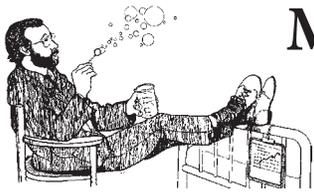


**The Improbable Research podcast is back!**

[https://www.improbable.com/  
category/the-weekly-improbable-research-podcast/](https://www.improbable.com/category/the-weekly-improbable-research-podcast/)

### Where There's More

There's always new improbable — it's not what you expect! — stuff on the **Improbable Research blog** at [IMPROBABLE.COM](https://improbable.com)



# MEDICAL RESEARCH REVIEW: FLOWER POT ON THE HEAD

*Investigations of a medical nature*  
by Nan Swift, Improbable Research staff

## Flower Pot on the Head

“Unusual Mode of Cervical Spine Injury,” P. Kushwaha, D.P. Sharma, H. Singh, and D. Singh, *The Indian Journal of Neurotrauma*, vol. 8, no. 1, June 2011, pp. 51-52. The authors, at G.B. Pant Hospital, New Delhi, India, report:

[W]e present an unusual case report of cervical spine injury in a young female with healthy spine. The injury resulted by the fall of a flower pot on her head. This resulted in fracture of C 4 vertebra which required surgical intervention.

## Unusual mode of cervical spine injury

P Kushwaha MS, DP Sharma MS, H Singh M Ch, D Singh M Ch  
Department of Neurosurgery, G B Pant Hospital, New Delhi

**Abstract:** The common causes of cervical spine injury includes trauma particularly road side accidents. Some time trivial trauma of spine can produce neurological deficits particularly if the spine is already diseased e.g. osteoporosis of tuberculosis. we present an unusual case report of cervical spine injury in a young female with healthy spine The injury resulted by the fall of a flower pot on her head. This resulted in fracture of C 4 vertebra which required surgical intervention.

**Keywords:** cervical spine; cervical spine fracture; cervical spine trauma

## The Case of the Swallowed Root Canal Implement

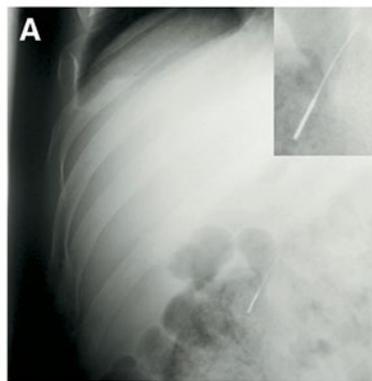
“Why Men Should Not Iron: Unperceived Swallowed Dental Root Instrument Causes Seven Years of Abdominal Pain,” Tim Oliver Lankisch, Michael Peter Manns, and Jochen Wedemeyer, *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology*, vol. 6, no. 9, 2008, p. A32. The authors explain that:

A 77-year-old retired engineer and emancipated husband presented with right upper abdominal pain for 7 years occurring during movements of the upper part of the body, especially when ironing his shirts.... At our department, an esophagogastroduodenoscopy showed a needle-like foreign body sticking deep in the thickened posterior duodenal wall, protruding widely into the duodenal lumen (Figure B). It was removed by forceful extraction with a rat tooth forceps and identified as a dental root canal instrument (C; above, extracted instrument, distinctly changed by gastric acid; below, original). The patient then remembered that his complaints started after a dental root treatment under local anesthetics....

Since 1692, when the 4-year-old Prussian prince Frederick Wilhelm, father of Frederick the Great, swallowed a shoe buckle, foreign body ingestion has found a considerable interest.

## Why Men Should Not Iron: Unperceived Swallowed Dental Root Instrument Causes Seven Years of Abdominal Pain

TIM OLIVER LANKISCH, MICHAEL PETER MANNs, and JOCHEN WEDEMEYER  
Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Endocrinology, Hannover Medical School, Hannover, Germany



*continued >*

# MEDICAL RESEARCH REVIEW: FLOWER POT ON THE HEAD [CONTINUED]

## The Farmer, His Neuropathic Pain and the Cow Fence

“The Farmer, His Neuropathic Pain and the Cow Fence,” Jock Murray, *Practical Neurology*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2008, pp. 183–185. The author, at Dalhousie University, Canada, explains:

He knew from experience that touching the fence gave a repetitive jolt that was strong but not really painful, and not harmful—just enough to keep the cows from wandering.

Over the months he developed a pattern of electrical treatment with the wires on his cow fence, which he continued to refine over the next few years. When he awoke with pain each morning he would dress and walk to the pasture, take off the boot on his painful right foot, and place it on the damp earth. Then he would grab the fence wire with his right hand to experience a repetitive jolt of electricity. He would hold on until the pain in his leg waned and then disappeared over 8–10 minutes. The pain would be gone or mild for the rest of the day, allowing him to get on with his work. By suppertime the pain would usually gradually return so he would repeat the process again.

AN INTERESTING CASE

Pract Neurol 2008; 8: 183-185

### The farmer, his neuropathic pain and the cow fence

Jock Murray

*Detail from the study “The Farmer, His Neuropathic Pain and the Cow Fence.”*



The patient in his pasture, with his bare foot on the ground and hand on the electric fence, experiencing repeated jolts of electricity until his leg pain is relieved. He did this twice a day for 50 years.