Coronavirus Mutations
Maxime J Coles MD

Viruses constantly change through mutations and new variants are expected to appear over time. They can emerge or disappear or they can last forever. Multiple variants have caused the disease of COVID-19 and they continue to be discovered around the world with this pandemic. Coronaviruses are called this way because of the resemblance the spike proteins bear to a crown at its surface.

The SARS-CoV-2 is going through mutations and one should ask if the infectivity of the virus has changed because of its exposure to antibodies binding or to the phenomenon of neutralization. Multiple COVID-19 variants are circulating in the United States, in England and around the world. Three new variants have been discovered in the United Kingdom in September 2020 and in other countries like South Africa and Nigeria: The “N501Y” and the “D614G” mutations have raised concerns about the possible disastrous effects. These variants seem to spread more easily and more quickly. A rapid spread was noted in the south eastern part of England questioning the new vaccines efficacy. Hopefully, there is no evidence that a more severe disease or more illness and even more death is seen.

During the meantime, we all have friends or relative living in states like Tennessee, California or Georgia where COVID-19 cases have been on the rise. Hospitals, Healthcare clinics and Healthcare providers are overwhelmed, the same way we remember the healthcare providers in the states of New York and New Jersey, a little less than a year ago. Some patients are again unable to receive proper care although. Other areas may present with better news for a pandemic which can’t stop surprising us.

In this number
- Words of the Editor, Maxime Coles, MD
- Message from the AMHE President, Dr. J. Pierre-Paul Cadet
- La chronique de Rony Jean-Mary, M.D.
- La chronique de Reynald Altéma, M.D.
- A STEMI WITH BAGGAGE, Garly Saint Croix, MD
- Les origines de la Noel, Maxime Coles MD
- Info CHIR, BILAN DE L’ANNEE 2020
- AMHE Foundation
- Décès
- Le depart, Maxime Coles MD
- AHDH
- And more AMHE News…
Routine genetic surveillance of viral outbreaks was suggested for years by public health officials in the United States. Nowadays, the most transmissible coronavirus variant pummeling in Britain has already been detected in more than 45 countries. These new variants only add more pressure on the distribution of the vaccines to the population in need. The problem is not only regarding the quantity available for injections but when politicians keep playing their political strategies, it hurts to be less effective. It is imperative that more people get vaccinated before more mutations undercut the effect of the vaccines. We may have more than 7 million to have already received at least one dose of a specific COVID-19 vaccine. Soon 300,000 would have received both doses.

The CDC has recommended that healthcare workers and nursing home residents be the first to receive the vaccine. This policy may be well followed in the state of Florida under the surveillance of a governor who works toward achieving the goals but others in different states continue to play their political games and choose who will receive the doses, bringing confusion to the process. Unfortunately, many individuals refuse to get vaccinated or are not too sure they will ever be ready to accept the benefits or the side effects of such vaccination. During the mean time the virus keeps mutating like it would be expected from any other virus with time.

Are these mutations more lethal? An increase in transmissibility could mean a higher death count even if the lethality remains the same. We become conscious that the transmissibility raises alarm and increase the visits in the health care centers. It is nice to read a little what a retired professor, Adnan Erol wrote in an article recently published in the Journal Immunological Letters: “Are the emerging SARS-CoV-2 mutations friend or foe?”.

In this article, he argues that the mutations may not be entirely unfavorable to humans. We remember well that the SARS-CoV-2 uses its spike proteins (S1 and S2). (S1) to binds any human receptor like ACE2, or neuropilin-1or CD147/basigin, then the S2 subunit spike catalyzes the coronavirus’s fusion with the human cell membrane and set up the infection.

The D614G mutation was discovered in Europe and the 614 th amino acid mutated from the aspartic acid position (D) to the glycine (G) and soon that mutation become dominant in the world. The virus transmissibility and virulence was demonstrated also in animal experiments exposed to the virus (mice, non-human primate and human). Circulating antibodies made of B-cells will bind and neutralize the viruses or other microbes. So the D614G is more infectious, indeed but more vulnerable to antibody neutralization than the original strain of SARS-CoV-2. The mutation causes the virus to attack the cell more efficiently but the virus itself is more easily destroyed by the antibodies.

SARS-CoV-2 in its D614G mutation would increase the viral replication while the COVID-19 infected patients have more viral RNA. The severity of the disease and the mortality rate will not change because the mutations expose the virus to antibody for neutralization.

A second type of mutation, the N501Y is also rapidly spreading in London and south-east England. In this new strain, the Asparagine (N) is substituted to Tyrosine (Y) in position 501. This new strain has caused more than 60% of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the London area as reported by the England’s chief medical officer Chris Witty. This strain is more efficient at infecting cells but Professor Erol believes also that it becomes more prone to antibody neutralization. This theory has only been supported by computer data so far although more animal studies or cell cultures are on the way. It appears that the N501Y strain is not more deadly to the cells as it infects more efficiently delivering a viral load is 3-times higher than the original strain of SARS-CoV-2. Indeed, Pfizer mRNA vaccine works well against on this strain and antibodies isolated from vaccinated persons have effectively neutralized both strains, the original and the N501Y. The country of England has initiated a new lockdown to face this mutant virus.

A third mutation is detected through a most alarming form in South Africa, the E484K and appeared to have spread in many other nations as well. Like the other new mutations, it is thought to be more transmissible than the original form of coronavirus which emerged in China. There again, it does not appear to cause a more severe disease.

So the new variants have shown how they can spread quickly, bringing faster a disease from which we have learned so much over a year. The victims respond well to the actual known treatments. We have heard all the negative things from SARS-CoV-2 strains or its variants, such as
the D614G, N501Y and E484K mutations. The increased infectivity and transmissibility from these mutations is indeed a cause for alarm, since more cases equal to a higher death counts. However, it’s also fortunate that these mutations render the SARS-CoV-2 weaker against the immune system, because with these mutations, it becomes more susceptible to antibody neutralization. Otherwise, the increased viral replication and shedding leading to a more lethal Covid-19 disease, is not seen. Overall, although there is an increased transmission from the D614G, N501Y and E484K mutations, which is unfortunate but we can be glad that the disease severity and the death rate are not any worse.

Can we be surprised if this coronavirus last for years.? I was discussing with my colleagues at the AMHE and I opined that this virus may last another six to eight more month. We have learned on the pattern exhibited by the SARS-1, perhaps. Obviously, I am not the finest expert but I was the only one addressing our board of trustee at the AMHE as well as the Central Executive Committee (CEC) to impllore the last July 2020 cancellation of the annual convention as soon as the Olympic Games were postponed in a world debate. We understood the seriousness of this pandemic disease which was about to impact the world. I do believe that with the changes in the virus, we may be ready in a half of a year to resume our regular activities. The AMHE convention in 2021 will need as well to be as well postponed or cancelled or find another alternative for our summer activities, next July 2021.

Every day, patients with the COVID-19 are being treated and released from the hospital, but even if many are tested negative for the SARS-CoV-2, it is far from saying that they have fully recovered. Almost 30% of the one treated will vegetate for a wild stage called “Long-Covid” in which a patient discharged from a hospital with a negative test for the virus, still present signs of shortness of breath, extreme fatigue, joint pain, myalgia, cognitive behavior as well as gastrointestinal or cardiac problems. This has been proven in fact, that many patients with “Long-Covid” may have never been hospitalized.

We are aware now that antibodies take around 3 weeks at least to form after the established infection and the CDC has shown that these antibodies specific to SARS-CoV-2 were also discovered in donated blood samples (Dec 2019). Countries like Brazil China, Italy and Spain have even found the evidence that COVID-19 has appeared even before this date. Scientists understand now why the SARS-CoV-2 genomes were already so stable during the early months of the year 2020. The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and do not contain the actual virus, so they can’t transmit the disease. More, monoclonal antibodies are being tested in the laboratory to provide more immunologic help and prevent the SARS-CoV-2 virus from entering a healthy cell. These monoclonal antibodies can’t cause COVID-19 either.

Meanwhile, experts rally to speed up vaccination around the world. There are in the pipeline at least 20 vaccines in phase 3 trails, seven for limited use and three already approved for full use in different countries: Pfizer-BioNtech, Moderna, and Oxford-AstraZeneca. This last one is approved for use only in the United Kingdom. The vaccine rollout has been slow around the world at the exception of the state of Connecticut perhaps. In the United Kingdom where the N501Y strain was found to be more contagious but did not seem to be the cause for a more severe disease.

Controversial changes in the dosing guidelines are seen when one wants to delay the timing of the second dose or another one wants to allow mixing or matching vaccine between the two doses. More, it is question that the actual vaccine may become also available at different retail pharmacies like CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid and even Costco to enhance the process of vaccination. In fact, it may be soon distributed at more than 40,000 pharmacies as mentioned by the Health Secretary Alex Azar. Even Walmart just claimed their willingness to help in the distribution of the vaccine. Many are waiting for the Johnson and Johnson vaccine which will require only one injection.

Anthoni Fauci, one of our expert in the USA, states that he would not delay the second dose and agrees with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that the vaccines are not interchangeable and should not be mixed in their dosage. Concerns about a vaccine shortage may have the authorities at the National Institute of Health (NIH) look for the possibilities to stretch the vaccine supply, like using half of a dose to vaccinate.

In Brazil, a Chinese Sinovac Biotech vaccine was found to be 78% effective after it was reported that 13,000 volunteers enrolled to take
the vaccine in July 2020. The facts remain that 218 Covid-19 cases were discovered in the group but 160 of those infected cases had received a placebo. The conclusions have brought doubts on the transparency of this study.

In December 2020, other researchers from Sinovac presented a vaccine with a 91% effectiveness after a large trial was conducted in Turkey with 752 volunteers receiving the vaccine while again 570 got the placebo. There are a lot of questions about this trial as well. In anyway, Sinovac is ready to supply Indonesia, Turkey, Chile, Singapore, Ukraine and Thailand as reported by the New York Times.

Finally, India just approved its first Covid-19 vaccines from Oxford-AstraZeneca for emergency use only. This vaccine was approved before even collecting data on the Phase 3 trial, bringing doubts and sharp criticism.

Around the world we are all looking for a way to obtain a “Herd Immunity”. This is a term that has been used when it is possible to eliminate a pathogen especially when almost everybody has already been infected by it. The country of Sweden has adopted such model at the beginning of the pandemic with purposely leaving the population unprotected in the hope that a maximum of subjects will catch the virus. This concept was promoted but how can we be sure of reaching the desired level?

With the vaccines presently on the market for distribution at great scale, this is our last hope to reach this level of Herd Immunity, but for how long? We don’t even know how long natural immunity or immunity simply to an actual vaccine will last. We don’t know how many individuals can or will become immunized even after taking both doses. More, we don’t know if the virus will evolve to become resistant to all vaccines. Many have a better use of the term “herd protection”. If we have a choice, it is definitely better to receive the vaccine than to become the victim of the infection.

Nobody can tell how long they will remain protected after contacting the infection or after receiving the vaccine. Possibly there may be different pathways to reach this status of protection. New York and New Jersey have learned how to manage the pandemic earlier in the year 2020 but the cases and hospitalizations are rising gain. They have learned from their mistakes hopefully. We have already been under a year of confinement and protection against a virus we are still learning how to avoid and treat.

I am looking for the time to take my second dose of Moderna vaccine at the end of the month, like many of us on the front line and many old patients in the nursing home or with comorbidities have already. Meanwhile it is reported that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is likely to be effective against the new contagious variant strain discovered in the United Kingdom but this search has not been peer-reviewed yet and there is no independent study on any vaccine’s effectiveness against the variant published either. This variant could become the dominant form of the virus.

How many more friends will keep on losing their life in the line of duty, while taking care of patients with COVID-19? I hope that all will be able to appreciate the beneficial effects of a vaccine. To the one refusing to take it, you place many others at risk if you contact the disease and your chances in becoming a victim of this virus or its mutated forms increase every day. Please get vaccinated, wear your mask, avoid non-essential activities and keep being confined for your well-being.

This week, we have lost at the AMHE two physicians husband and wife in New-York, one in Florida, one in Montreal and we have at least ten (5) others newly infected with the virus. We remain concerned about those new and more transmissible forms which are emerging and spreading so easily, knowing well they may become the dominant strain.

May I conclude in repeating the words of Cicero to Catalina: … “Usque Tandem Abutere COVID-19 Patientia Nostra”... More than two (2) million have already died worldwide in this pandemic since the impact of this highly transmissible virus. The United States has accounted almost 400 thousand deaths. Haiti may be privileged for not having more victims, but the fact that nobody is practicing social distancing and the refusal of a population to wear a mask, have placed us at risk or allowing the majority perhaps to reach that herd immunity. Notre Dame du Perpetuel Secours is certainly watching over our country like she did in 1882 during the epidemic of “Petite Verole”. Haiti remains with less than 240 deaths and a little more than 3000 infected by the virus.

Maxime Coles MD
Boca Raton FL
Dear Maxime Coles,

January 11, 2021 President’s message

Dear colleagues, family members and friends!

As we are entering a new year, we need to look back at all the hurdles as well as the positive steps the AMHE has taken to reach out to the sky.

2020 has been the most painful and disastrous year in the annals of the Association. Besides countless numbers of disappearing AMHE members by this spiteful covid-19, heart disease has discriminately continued its course to worsen the big picture. Insofar, all 8 Chapters or main areas of interest of the Association have sustained several damages and suffering is still mounting in our community. With the introduction of new vaccines and the prospect of incoming new ones, we are hoping for better outcomes to meet everyone’s expectations for a better life. However, we still need to wait for several months to have a success story to tell. Moreover, the recommendations by the CDC to avoid the Covid-19 contamination are still on and the post-Holiday period is highly expected to jack up the number of new cases. It is needless to ask each and every one of you to use more vigilance to bring a much-needed support to your respective communities. Prevention is the name of the game and our educational programs on Radio, TV, Newspapers or newsletters are really essential tools to be used in the battle against the common enemy.

We have lost family members, friends, colleagues, or work peers. We are still in the mourning mode. However, we won’t stop overstressing the great job of our heroes who comprise Doctors, Nurses, Lab techs, Physical Techs, Fire-fighters, Maintenance crews, Companions, Body handlers, Police officers and security guards….have accomplished. They all deserve our utmost appreciation, and our focus point should be that we are in it together to destroy it together. Regardless of those positive tests in the millions or death cases in the thousands so far, our ultimate goal is to bring everything to the number zero and we won’t rest until we accomplish our task.

Dear colleagues, team-mates, one thing should be always in our mind: “Together we can fight and destroy the beast,” so we can continue in the way paved by our predecessors some 50 years ago.

The CEC had a very ambitious agenda for 2020. However, we had accomplished only part of it, such as:

1- The disaster preparedness conference on January 11th at Father Gerard Jean-Juste Community Center in Miami was well attended and ended with recognition to certain leaders who made a difference in post January 12 earthquake in Haiti 10 years ago. The second part that was scheduled to take place on April 25th had to be canceled due to area lock down.
2- The Trips to meet face-to-face with Chapters members have been converted in Zoom meetings.

3- A new Orlando, Florida emerged, among 5 in total (Boston, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Paris).

4- The Annual AMHE Convention was converted into a Zoom Conference that occurred on August 14, 15, 16 with more than 160 participants who took advantage of the last progress exposed by some vibrant speakers from Haiti. The GHESKIO Chief Officer, Dr. W. Pape as well as The Haitian Red Cross and CORI President, Dr Guiteau Jean-Pierre as well as The Medical Director of the internationally accredited “Hopital de Mirebalais”, Dr Ralph Ternier and associates gave us a true description of the sanitary conditions of the country in the Covid19 era. The top-notch presentations in general gave us something simply memorable. The scientific committee, with dedicated members, chaired by Dr Eric Jerome had shown its muscle in preparing such an upscale conference in less than 2 months and the CMEs, for which we sincerely for the delay, have finally hit the road to bring some smile to the participant faces, at last.

5- The Distance learning program with the FMP (Faculte de Medecine et de Pharmacie) is at rearranging phase cause of the social distancing imposed on us.

6- The excellent Radiology program with UEH (Universite d’Etat d’Haiti) is moving full speed with a starting date to come shortly.

The Central Executive Committee reiterates its support to the families of the departed members and salute each chapter separately. This time, the Montreal Chapter is the elected one. It is with great respect and on behalf of all the members of the AMHE that, as the CEC President, I present our deepest sympathy to the following families who have lost loved ones in AMHE communities in the US, Canada, and Haiti.

This year, the CEC will continue with the same programs since we haven’t reached completion and will eventually envision a better way to handle the Annual Convention, pending the pandemic pathway.

The AMHE 50th Anniversary celebration is set to be kicked off with the full participation of the leadership of the Association such as, the Board of Trustees, the Central Executive Committee, the Foundation with support from the Ethics Committee, the Scientific Committee, the Public Relation/Membership Committee, and special committees created to carry on the activities until August 2022.

Today is the 11th Anniversary of this unforgettable tragedy in Haiti. As we are trying to rebuild on ashes, we want to remind everyone that life is a two-way sword, precious to enjoy and fragile to protect. To curve down the effects of Covid-19, some physicians and other medical professionals have chosen to boost their immunity by using the natural way, others have exhibited their preference for the vaccines, because as Healthcare providers we have been using for years without any inconvenient. The AMHE leadership wants each and everyone to stay safe and healthy so we can meet our community expectations.

Peace be with you all!

J. Pierre-Paul Cadet, M.D.

President, AMHE CEC
Enfin tôt mercredi matin, le président Donald Trump, désormais ex-président des États-Unis d’Amérique, a quitté la maison blanche pour sa résidence de Mar-a-Lago où il séjournera temporairement avant de se fixer sur une résidence définitive. Il est peut être le président républicain le plus adulé de la frange républicaine de droite mais aussi le plus honni de l’aristocratie politique Américaine. Il laisse la présidence avec un taux d’approbation de 27%, moins que tout autre président sortant des États-Unis. Sa présidence aura été marquée par des turbulences de toutes sortes culminant en la perte de sa majorité d’abord au congres en 2018 et ensuite au sénat à sa sortie du pouvoir.. Il est le seul président à avoir été « impeached » par deux fois, et ceci en moins d’une année. L’histoire retiendra surtout que des hordes de bandits, venus de tous les coins et recoins des États-Unis, sous l’instigation de Donald Trump, ont pris d’assaut le capitol, siège du congres et du sénat Américains dans le but d’empêcher la certification des résultats électoraux qui devaient consacrer la victoire de Joseph R. Biden comme quarante-sixième président des États-Unis. Sa présidence aura été marquée par des turbulences de toutes sortes culminant en la perte de sa majorité d’abord au congres en 2018 et ensuite au sénat à sa sortie du pouvoir.. Il est le seul président à avoir été « impeached » par deux fois, et ceci en moins d’une année. L’histoire retiendra surtout que des hordes de bandits, venus de tous les coins et recoins des États-Unis, sous l’instigation de Donald Trump, ont pris d’assaut le capitol, siège du congres et du sénat Américains dans le but d’empêcher la certification des résultats électoraux qui devaient consacrer la victoire de Joseph R. Biden comme quarante-sixième président des États-Unis. Il faut bien dire que les démocrates qui ne s’attendaient guère à une victoire de Donald Trump en 2016, lui ont jeté des pelures de banane glissantes sous les pieds tout le long de son administration, et ont finalement eu gain de cause sur ce joueur peu habile qui, au lieu d’éviter certains écueils, y a plutôt accouru tête baissée , ignorant qu’il est parfois préférable de perdre une bataille et de gagner la guerre finale. Enfin de compte, il est le grand perdant de la bataille politique serrée qui s’est jouée autour et contre lui durant les quarante-huit mois écoulés. Il est vrai que Trump s’en est allé de la présidence, mais il ne va pas pour autant faire ses adieux à la politique. Il ne faut pas non plus ignorer la capacité de rebondissement d’un politicien aussi charismatique que Donald Trump. Il a promis daller se ragaillardir et se préparer à d’autres guerres au cours des joutes électorales futures. Tout n’est que d’attendre. Mais a coté de Donald Trump comme perdant, il y a aussi d’autres perdants, tels le parti républicain qui tenait mordicus à le supporter tête baissée en dépit de ses écarts grossiers vis-à-vis des règles primaires de la bienséance. La morale républicaine, par peur de s’opposer formellement à Trump dans ses errements, aura connu un effritement majeur. Même lorsque la morale est toujours absente de la politique, elle doit au moins s’inscrire en porte-étendard de celle ci si l’on veut que l’on professe une certaine foi dans les desiderata exprimés. Donald Trump laisse le parti très affaibli, comme une sorte de miroir brisé dont les morceaux se reconstitueront difficilement. A court terme, le parti républicain n’est pas en danger de survie ; mais il aura fort à faire pour changer de message et inspirer confiance. Si les derniers événements de janvier et surtout le comportement de Trump depuis les élections de Novembre, ne mettent guère en danger la popularité du parti dont 74 millions d’électeurs ont voté pour Trump, ils ont cependant provoqué un déficit de crédibilité dont on prendra bien du temps pour s’en remettre.. A part de rares figures, dont Mit Romney, Susan

**LE DEPART DE TRUMP DE LA MAISON BLANCHE : FIN D’UNE ERE ou FIN D’UNE ERREUR ?**

Rony Jean-Mary, M.D.
Collins et Lisa Murkowski, les républicains se sont révélés de vrais lâches qui avaient peur d’être sanctionnés dans des primaires souvent onéreux par le président sortant. Deux sénateurs républicains qui se sont opposés à Tromp en 2016, avaient du abandonner la course lorsqu’il s’était révélé que Trump allait les exposer à une sorte de primaire au sein du parti. Mais en plus du parti républicain, il y a aussi la frange religieuse du pays qui avait fortement misé sur la réélection de Trump. Beaucoup se disaient porteurs de révélations spéciales de la part de Dieu leur annonçant que Tromp allait être réélu. Ils voulaient forcer Dieu à parler en leur faveur, mais se sont révélés en fin de compte, de vrais blasphémateurs et des faux prophètes. Et si Dieu devait les punir pour avoir menti en son nom, leur châtiment ne serait rien d’autre que la mort. (Deutéronomes 18 :v20).

Un nouveau président a pris cette semaine les rennes du pouvoir à la maison blanche. Il n’a qu’une faible majorité dans les deux chambres et devra aller vite en besogne pour contrer certaines des décisions téméraires, injustes et racistes de l’administration précédente. L’économie s’annonce déjà sous des aubes plutôt sombres. Neuf cent mille personnes ont appliqué la semaine dernière pour des formes de compensation sociale type chômage, le pays est plus divisé que jamais et près de quatre à cinq mille personnes sont entrain de mourir tous les jours à cause de la Covid-19 pandémie. Voilà en gros ce qui attend le nouveau président du pays qui doit bien être en train de se demander qu’est ce qu’il était venu faire dans cette galère ?

Rony Jean-Mary, M.D.
Coral Springs, FL.
le 24 Janvier 2021.

UNE NUIT DANS LA NOIRCEUR.
TANTE TELLE ET CES DAMES SARAS QUI FONT BOUGER LA VIE.
Rony Jean-Mary, M.D.

Je suis retourné à la ville de mon enfance pour les vacances de décembre et de fin d’année. Je suis tombé comme par hasard, sur une photo de Tante telle, Estelle de son vrai nom, la seconde femme de la maison familiale, la sœur ainée de ma feue mère, et qui a vécu toute sa vie à ses côtés. J’ai regardé tout autour dans cette vieille maison, aujourd’hui rénovée, mais qui charrie encore des souvenirs précieux du temps de mon enfance. J’ai surtout pensé à cette dette morale envers Tante telle qui a géré cette maison d’une main ferme et tendre, nous a formés et éduqués et a fait de nous ce que nous sommes aujourd’hui. Les dettes morales sont bien plus lourdes à payer que les dettes monétaires, car elles ne sont pas quantifiables et on ne finit jamais de les payer entièrement. Tante Telle était commerçante, d’un genre un peu plus sophistiqué que le commerce des Dames Saras. Mais elle partait très tôt, souvent en compagnie d’elles, vers le village voisin, plus d’une fois la semaine, étaler son commerce, et acheter à meilleurs prix ces produits que l’agriculture artisanale pouvait encore offrir.

Le commerce, c’était surtout des draps, des taies d’oreiller, des tapis en plastiques, des jupes et des corsages, des chemises à homme, des chaussettes et tout ce qu’on pouvait encore produire dans l’atelier familial, en attendant les jours de marché locaux pour les vendre aux passants. Les paysans préféraient encore les habits localement cousus aux vêtements d’occasion communément appelés ’PèPè’ qui nous viennent directement de la terre étoilée et qui atrophient la production locale.

En passant mes mains sur sa photo, j’ai soudainement pensé à une calamité, une nuit noire qu’elle a dû braver, un soir au retour du marché, en route vers la maison…. Et je me suis mis à décrire ce que j’ai vécu cette nuit –là, un jeudi noir de juillet… Il se faisait déjà nuit; et l’on attendait depuis des
heures l’arrivée de Tante Telle. Elle était partie tôt ce matin-là, vers le marché local avoisinant, comme de coutume, tous les jeudis, pour vendre les morceaux de pacotille que sa sœur, ma mère, passait toute la semaine à confectionner sur sa machine à coudre. En général, Les marchandes partaient en groupes de six à dix, et se levaient tôt le matin pour partir à dos de bêtes, parcourant des dizaines de kilomètres, jusqu’au village le plus proche où le marché allait avoir lieu.

On se rassemblait en un point précis et une fois retentie la cloche du matin, on était prêt à partir, à s’engager sur la route souvent tortueuse qui emmenait au marché. C’est ici la vie des “Dames Saras “ comme on les appelle chez nous, qui font le va et vient entre les diverses contrées du pays, échangeant des produits de toutes sortes, assurant ainsi une vie décente à leur famille.

La cloche de l’”église commence à retentir généralement vers quatre du matin. Elle sonnait pourtant quelque fois un peu trop tôt, ce qui exposait les marchandes aux criminels de tous bords ,aux gangsters, et autres sociétés bizango qui sillonnent la route à la recherche de proie facile, et qui pourraient n’avoir pas fini encore de pavaner toute la nuit.

Tante Telle était parmi les personnage les plus respectés du groupe à cause de son âge avancé, et les plus jeunes s’assuraient toujours qu’elle fût au beau milieu, sur sa mule, pour être protégée par elles toutes du contingent.

En temps pluvieux, par ces nuits noires où l’orage est vainqueur, et où il pleut sans arrêt, on devait retenir son souffle jusqu’à ce que tout le monde soit rentré à la maison. Les rares éclairs qui sillonnaient le ciel noir, étaient les seules étincelles de lumière qui pénètrent le va et vient entre les diverses contrées du pays, échangeant des produits de toutes sortes, assurant ainsi une vie décente à leur famille.

Parce qu’il était près de 10heures du soir, on avait la suspicion que quelque part, quelque chose avait du lui arriver en cours de route. Car, sept heures du soir était toujours la limite tardive pour les marchandes de rentrer à la maison et de boucler la journée.

La dernière fois, alors que la rivière Rio frio était en crue, et qu’elle tenta de traverser vers l’autre bord, elle faillit y quitter sa vie, n’était-ce un transbordeur habile qui prit la corde de l’animal et l’aida à s’en sortir. Nos routes n’ont jamais été construites ni maintenues.. Les révolutions, les changements rapides de gouvernement ,aussi bien les dictatures de longue durée , n’ont jamais permis d’exécuter les grands projets de développement, soit par manque de temps ,soit par paresse et par complaisance d’un pouvoir absolu qui corrompt toujours absolument.

Ce soir-là, si le retard venait de l’autre coté de la ville, sur la route allant vers Thom onde et Marmont, on aurait moins de peur puisqu’on sait qu’il y a des rivières en crue qui, avec les fortes averses, gardent les passants bloqués pendant des heures, sur les deux rives des ravin et rivières en crue. Là, lorsque cela arrive, pendant que les cours d’eau devaient baisser en intensité et reprendre leur lit ordinaire, les gens tout mouillés sous la pluie, se partagent à la lueur d’une chandel ou d’une lampe à kérosène ,les quelques rares nourritures qui restèrent de leur sac en paille, attendant que la rivière redevienne passable.

Parfois certains passeurs, agissant en avantageurs , vont tester la force du courant d’eau et aider les gens à traverser vers l’autre bord pour quelques centimes ou un morceau de cassave et de ra padou...

…Tout est commercialisé et politisé chez nous : la misère, les détritus, le manque de ressources etc. …il y a toujours lieu pour quelqu’un de faire son beure, et de s’enrichir de la douleur ou du malheur d’autrui. Par ces temps pluvieux, il peut être doublé de noir pour ces centaines de marchandes quand elles n’ont rien vendu de toute la journée et qu’elles doivent rentrer bredouilles à la maison.

C’était un marché très imprévisible, puisqu’il devait dépendre des denrées que les paysans apportent au marché. Denrées de plus en plus rares puisqu’en saison pluvieuse, temps de laboureur de défrichement du sol, les paysans sont plus préoccupés à travailler la terre qu’à venir dépenser leur maigre réserve. Faut –il aussi rappeler que la pluie est le seul moyen d’arrosage pour ces terres qui ne reçoivent ni engrais ni fertilisants pour engraisser le sol et augmenter sa productivité.

En mode “‘ si bon die vlé”, nous sommes un pays essentiellement agricole, mais nous achetons jusqu’à nos citrons de nos voisins de l’est ,et les dollars de la diaspora retraversent la frontière aussitôt qu’ils n’y arrivent... En décembre, c’était différent, ma tante ramenait souvent un
gros sac de billets de gourdes sales, que nous prenions plaisir à aider nos parents à compter. L’argent, surtout les billets sont très malmenés par les commerçants et il fallait souvent du temps pour étirer et séparer les billets les uns des autres.

Dans le passé, quand Tante telle avait des difficultés sur la route, papa en bon chef de maison, s’armait de sa machette, prenait la route en sens inverse et partit à sa rencontre.

Dans toute la ville il n’y avait pas plus de vingt camions et voitures, et l’on était à l’antipode de la civilisation moderne telle qu’on la connait aujourd’hui. Il n’y avait pas de téléphone cellulaire comme on en voit ces jours-ci. Et, j’ai du mal à chercher dans les rues tellement les camions et les motocyclettes sont nombreux. Mais le nombre de cas d’accidents de véhicule à moteur (MVA) a aussi augmenté de manière exponentielle sans une mise en place de structure adéquate pour traiter les nouveaux cas. C’est toujours l’Etat pompier qui se pratique chez nous. On éteint le feu du mieux que l’on peut sans vraiment en prévenir la cause. Ce qui faisait surtout peur, en plus de la noirceur, c’était l’état boueux et glissant de la route qui rendait la marche impraticable à tout moment. Depuis plusieurs décennies, ma tante faisait le même trajet pour supporter la famille et aider maman et papa à élever leurs enfants. Cette fois-là, papa n’avait pas d’autres choix que de sortir chercher Tante Telle dans la nuit. La mule dont elle montait dessus était trop fatiguée et refusait de marcher. Quant elle sentait que la nuit était avancée, elle décida de prendre abri chez Attila, un hougan de la zone qui connaissait bien mon père. Mais Attila n’était pas encore rentré cette nuit-là, et travaillait tard dans ses champs. Tante telle a du attendre qu’il revint de ses champs pour qu’il la conduise à la maison. Attila a du laisser la mule se reposer chez lui et prendre un de ses animaux à lui pour monter tante telle dessus et la ramener à la maison. Nous sommes un peuple très solidaire entre nous. Quelqu’un tombe – t-il évanoui sur la route on trouvera 10 passants pour jeter de l’eau fraîche sur sa tête et chercher à le réanimer. Papa avait à peine quitté la maison qu’il croisa Attila sur le terrain d’aviation et reprit d’elle notre chère tante pour l’amener à la maison. Attila était un garçon cançon qui n’avait jamais peur de la nuit. Comme notre Attila dans la littérature au Moyen Age, “Là où il passait les herbes ne repoussaient pas sous les pieds de son cheval…”. Quand elle arriva à la maison cette nuit-là, il était près de 11 heures du soir, l’on se sentait tous soulagé de revoir notre chère tante rentrer à la maison saine et sauve, en chair et en os… Mais elle était abattue, épousée plus que d’habitude, et devait prendre un bon thé chaud de citronnelle bien siroté pour se réchauffer le sang avant de boire sa soupe au giraumon qu’elle aimait bien déguster au retour de ces journées accablantes. On réalisera qu’il y avait bien plus de peur que de mal. Et ma mère qui priait depuis des heures, a du se relever de ses genoux pour allumer le réchaud et lui refaire son lit. Elle poursuivra avec cette histoire, demain au petit matin, lorsque tous, nous serons réunis dans la cuisine pour le café matinal. La contribution de Tante telle est inestimable, Elle ne s’était jamais mariée et préféra dédier sa vie à élever les enfants de ma mère. Elle nous faisait réciter nos leçons les soirs après les journées de dur labeur. Je me demandais parfois si elle comprenait elle-même ce qu’elle nous faisait réciter. Mais sa seule présence suffisait à nous faire prendre le droit chemin. Elle reste chère à nos cœurs et nous parlons encore d’elle avec respect et admiration malgré le laps de temps qui s’est écoulé depuis qu’elle est partie de ce monde. Les années se sont écoulées, le commerce a disparu. Ma mère et ma tante ne sont plus. Ces dames Sara piliers de l’économie nationale sont de plus en plus rares et en voie de disparition. Mais la vieille machine subsiste intacte dans le couloir de la maison en souvenir des services qu’elle a rendus à la famille. Nous parlons d’un musée familial où seront entreposées cette machine à coudre et tant d’autres pièces tels un buffet et un garde-manger qui sont presque centenaires. Revenir sous le toit familial m’a toujours donné l’occasion d’apprécier combien la vie a été clémente envers moi et combien je suis redevable pour tant de faveurs dont j’ai été l’objet de toute part. C’est aussi l’occasion de revivre son passé pour chercher à mieux gérer son avenir. Je retournerai m’y ressourcer à chaque fois que le besoin s’en fera sentir.

Rony Jean-Mary, M.D.
Coral Springs, FL.
le 24 Janvier 2021.
Years from now, we will remember this day with as much revulsion as now. We will remember to the minute where we were and what we were doing when we first learned of the news and then became glued to the TV watching a mob of zealots. They were oversold on the lie that an election was rigged, and their rights were infringed upon. They were egged on by the liar-in-chief who can’t stand the status of a loser since his supercharged ego wouldn’t allow it.

A mob of white fanatics assaulting a government office is nothing new in the history of this republic. What’s new is the widespread dissemination in real time of skullduggery, American style, to the whole world to see. It also provided a stark contrast of a security force at the very minimum politely treating the thugs emboldened on the spot by this tacit approval and at times as shown in videos, aided and abetted. When the participants are of a different hue, or a different political bent, the response is the exact opposite, no matter the validity of the cause. The security force always is present in mass, uses a low threshold to initiate violence and arrest the innocents. None of that was to be seen this past Wednesday.

Decent humans were appalled by such a scene. Objective observers were left to ask, how come? As if the horror show were not enough, the grotesque scenario of sycophants and apologists on the media were quick to try to convince us we were victims of an optical illusion: the mob was not a pro-Trump band of thugs, but this was an infiltration of left-leaning anarchists. This flies in the face of the fact that a lot of the participants were taking selfies, streaming their action on social media and were very clear about who they were and whom they were supporting and what cause they were holding dear to the heart.

What about the historical perspective? Many years from now, long after the dust has settled, historians will shake their head and wonder about this process of daily assault against democracy. It very likely will be strange to fathom that a leader was using his pulpit not for healing but as cudgel to sow conspiracy news, division four years running. He will be a case study as a demagogue espousing a personality cult, with basic instincts as low as a deep crater. We only need to remember that, “Plus ça change, plus ça reste le même.” The overarching charge underlying the angst against the result of the election was filled with racial undertone: the refusal to accept the right of vote, to respect the choice of enfranchised minorities when it runs afoul of the status quo. This is white mob violence redux. Lest we forget, we need to go back to history to learn the lesson that a certain sector of the populace feels very uncomfortable with the notion that it has to share political power, national wealth, with heretofore disenfranchised members of society. That segment of the populace is ready to go to extremes to protect its perceived loss of privileges. I emphasize the word perceive because the facts are the opposite; greater participation by all members of society results in an overall benefit by and for all members. It just so happens that racial animus can blind to such an extent that it prevents rational reaction, reasoning, and lends itself to group think, and persuasion of ever-present conspiracy against its interests.

The fact that a white mob can do damage to property and cause loss of lives with impunity is well
chronicled. We have previously described the events surrounding the Tulsa Massacre and other such genocidal riots. Two events that mimicked Jan 6 and provide some serious insight into the mindset of decision makers in so far as crime and punishment, occurred in 1874 and 1876, as Jamelle Bouie from the NY Times reminds us (1-8-21). Both times, a white mob stormed a State Capitol as a reaction to an election result not to its liking because it entailed black folks who were till very recently holders of the very low status known as sub-humans, like… slaves. In 1874, in New Orleans, a group called White League held both City Hall and the Capitol because they wanted to depose Governor Kellogg and replace him with his opponent from the previous election that took place in 1872. [In those days Republicans and Democrats had the reverse order of social commitment from today]. That would have worked had it not been for President Ulysses Grant who had sent federal troops to restore order. However, the perpetrators received no punishment. That had sent a signal that seizing government property by force wouldn’t have been considered a crime. Hence in 1876, after an election in Louisiana, the same members of the White League again seized the same offices and installed manu militari Francis Nicholls as Democratic Governor. He saw to it that Reconstruction ended in his state. That method was duplicated in many other states to stem the participation of the freed slaves in the voting process, to begin the installation of Jim Crow laws and all of their aftermath.

The trouble that started outside the Capitol by lunatics found kindred spirits inside the chambers of Congress in two ambitious senators with impeccable pedigree each, having graduated at the top of their classes in Ivy League schools. Their political ambition and choice of scorched-earth policy to please a very conservative base hoodwinks our sense of decency, obliterates truth and lionizes mendacity. In the end, it reeks of a toxic notion of patriotism, in an exercise oblivious of its egregious assault on our intelligence. Fools come in all flavors and some of them are well educated, at least on paper. This brazen activity needs to be stopped in its track. The days of the hooded night riders running amok and terrorizing minorities must never return. Suits questioning our votes need to be driven out of office.

The silver lining maybe that such vile, open, demonstration of intolerance will result in new, resolute policy to stem systemic racism in government in both policy decision-making and enforcement. Let’s remember the “Summer of Hate” in 2017, when an equally revulsive show of raw hatred by white supremacists wielding tiki torches in Charlottesville. The then-president referred to them as “fine people.” This could be considered as a dress rehearsal for Jan 6. That march in the summer of 2017 has contributed to the election of that city’s first African-American mayor.

Let’s keep our fingers crossed and hope the incoming administration proceeds with sweeping changes for the better for all of us in society.

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**THE SLEUTH.**

*Reynald Altéma, MD*

Henry Daniel, or HD, as he prefers to be called, had developed a foible for solving problems. Not math, physics or any of the hard sciences, but human problems, like delving into their interactions and see how they can be managed. This was a tortuous path, one he arrived at through searing personal experience. Sired in a mixed marriage, his father came from Jamaica, himself the poor son of a Haitian political expatriate; his mother from a New England affluent white family; that family had a mixed descent of light Irish and dark Sicilian blood. He endured a lot of unpleasant ribbing at the hands of schoolmates, frenemies, as well as relatives and strangers. When he was little, he had a very light complexion. Some folks called him then, “high yellow.” As he was getting older, his hue changed to a darker complexion and he had heard the expression, “melanzana,” eggplant, during a visit to Sicily where to his amazement there were quite a few natives like him dating back from eons.

In addition to his skin tone, he stuttered. That was a cause of anguish because his classmates were relentless in their teasing. Initially this made him timid and he would remain mute so he could avoid the
embarrassment of others laughing at him. Between the skin color jokes and the speech issue, he had enough to be miserable. How he turned an obstacle on its head made him a better human being. His parents were clever and helped him face his issues head-on. They made him understand that some humans took an unhealthy pleasure to hurl verbal rocks at others. Not uncommonly they themselves felt insecure. Things were not always what they seemed, he learned.

Little by little, he was gaining confidence and became interested in matters of the mind, behavior, and he found history to be a good help as reference. His parents highly encouraged this effort. He took lessons to improve and then conquer his speech impairment. The matter of racial animus was somewhat harder to handle. Along the way, he became fascinated by some historical figures’ behavior being so contrarian to their official stances. His mother taught him that no less than Thomas Jefferson who railed against the intellect and the worth of black folks found happiness in a lifelong relationship with a mixed-race woman. Closer to us, Strom Thurmond an avowed segregationist senator from North Carolina, fathered a mixed-race daughter.

His father taught him about historical figures of great renown in the black community who were of mixed-race origin. This was to supplant criticism from some black friends who would insinuate he “wasn’t black enough.” For example, Frederick Douglass, considered among history’s greatest orators, and his runner-up, E.B. Dubois, were both of mixed-race origin. He learned not to feel uncomfortable about his origins, his skin pigmentation, his roots. He used self-deprecation as healing tool. He casually referred to himself and the variegated veneer of his heritage as “mud.” Such a spontaneous and descriptive epithet coming from him often thaws a glacial situation or an awkward moment. He could just as casually invoke the metaphor of syncopation, made famous by jazz music, to burnish his life’s perspective. “I use a weak spot as a pivot for reaching strength,” he would claim, without an iota of pedantry. He was good at solving problems, but as a human, he was not perfect. He remained self-conscious of two irritants in his life: poor penmanship and feet with a pungent odor. He managed both as well as he could, avoiding writing anything by hand as much as possible, “I don’t want to submit you to the torture of reading my hieroglyphics,” he would warn people in a light-hearted manner about it. A keen observer of humans, he came up with this successful formula and kept using it. He noted three types of reaction to that warning. As an arcane word, many didn’t understand its meaning. Some of them would be in awe but a bit embarrassed to admit to it. Others would spontaneously ask about its meaning and make an occasional sly remark about him using a fancy term. And, of course, some did get it. Usually, people acquiesced either out of simple courtesy, sympathy or were just pleased with his wit and graciously went along. As for the feet, he tried his best to keep them dry and tactfully avoided removing his socks even in intimate moments.

From his position as a guinea pig for solving social dilemma, he morphed into an aficionado of the human mind and behavior. His ability at problem solving blossomed at each step of his work experience. He had a cosmopolitan view of the world. He straddled both social strata. He felt comfortable at a formal dinner at the mansion of a family friend and at ease getting some jerk pork at a food stand when visiting his father’s country. He benefited from attending some of the best schools growing up in New England. He obtained a degree in Psychology in college. Fresh out of school, wanting to fly on his own, ready to conquer the world, he landed a job with big pharma as a drug rep. This wetting of the feet turned out to be a good training ground for his successive positions. That was during the heydays around the turn of the century when quite a bit of money was being spent lavishly on physicians to influence their prescribing habits.

He learned very quickly that the way to a physician’s desk was through befriending the front office staff. Charming the staff through a combination of cajoling, compliments and the ever so successful practice of offering perks and spoils. He was constantly bringing doughnuts, bagels or lunch to different offices. That worked wonders and earned him preferential treatment. Like having the opportunity of spending time with the physician to make the case of his medications over the competition’s. In these halcyon days, coffee mugs, fancy pens, theater tickets, premium seats at ballgames were part of the largesse used to influence a decision maker. As a result, HD was able to fill his quota and earn some nice bonuses. He was the poster boy of a successful drug rep. He looked the part also. Always nattily attired, with a ready smile, always finding the right word to splay to massage one’s ego.
The lesson he learned in that position was a simple but complicated truth. Interactions in solicitation panned out to the extent that one was deft at buttressing the other’s ego, fulfill needs and create incentives. The opportunity to fulfill a need on both sides was a fundamental part of the equation called commerce. Big pharma needed to sell its products. The rep’s bonus was tied to his ability to nudge the doc to write scripts for his meds. The doc in turn by having a chummy relationship with the rep was likely to give him the nod, all things being equal. Perks along the way made the decision somewhat easier. Having a heavy prescriber reach the status of a paid consultant for big pharma was a coup for HD. The return on the generous investment by big pharma assured that HD’s star would be noticed on the company’s radar. The more heavy prescribers he had in his territory, the better he looked to his boss and the more money he made. He was handling meds for hypertension in an urban area and the number of prescriptions he helped generate was going through the roof. He was well liked at the offices he was soliciting. He was smart enough not to mix business with pleasure. He wouldn’t date any of the staff members at offices in his territory. He had a reputation of having a field day with female reps, however. He would never confirm or deny the rumors, “I don’t believe in kiss and tell,” would be his equivocal, pithy response. What was obvious was they did like him. “A hunk,” some would say, to which in a tongue-in-cheek manner, he would respond, “Who, me?” A good fella, he was. He always kept on top of his assignments. He always impressed his manager and other higher-ups at company meetings.

In a conflation of hard work, stroke of luck, and what some suspected to be family connections, he went on a fast track and he ascended to be territory manager after 5 years of diligence. That was a plum job, usually reserved for members of the good-old-boys network. He trained other reps under his tutelage and his income was growing commensurately with their progress. However, a couple of years later, big pharma made a U-turn and stopped being so generous. In a process called retrenchment, scores of employees were let go. HD lost his position. At a crossroads, he decided to enroll in an intelligence program with the federal government after reading a want ad in the paper. An inveterate single, he devoted himself to this new career. After a rigorous two-year training, he received his first assignment at a post in Africa. His cover was as a rep for a Canadian software company offering firewall security for computer network and cyberspace. Entering the world of cloak-and-dagger, he used the leverage he had gained in his previous position to attract clients and make inroads with government contracts.

The players were different, but the rules of the game remained unchanged. He courted officials, gained their confidence and along the way recruited assets. The front company did benefit from his mastery of individual interactions. Just as before, he earned kudos at each assignment. 10 years into the trade, he received an assignment at headquarters, close to Washington, DC. His local chief as a parting advice told him, “If I were you, I would make some contacts there and end up working as a lobbyist. You are well suited for this type of job. And boy do they pay well!” “From your mouth to God’s ear,” HD replied. That reminded him of his days working for big pharma; the stakes in lobbying were a whole lot higher. He therefore made it his business to survey the landscape of Washington, DC, while stationed there. He needed to know about the social norms, the power brokers and their hangouts. Just as importantly, he needed to have a good understanding of the players in the underground vice trade; money and power always attract this service that works well in the shadow. He wanted to be prepared and be fluent in the nuances of the terrain since the ultimate calling was to influence behavior based on identified needs.

He did a stint of two years and quit. Through family connections, his own networking, he landed a job with a lobbying firm. His starting salary was three times his last one as a spook. HD’s portfolio was intriguing. His intelligence background would become very handy and as such his assignment was to help create a profile on interested parties: likes and dislikes, vices, habits, debts, liaisons, open as well as, if not especially, secret ones. As he saw it, he would continue to do the same type of work at a far higher remuneration. Instead of peddling medications, he was now involved in peddling influence, a rarefied environment. The similarity of the two jobs ends with the peddling. The former was an open secret. Software detailing prescribing patterns of physicians were reviewed openly. Decisions were made based on hard data that can be shared. Lobbying world was a whole different ballgame.

In its essence, it’s an interface between two parties who are not supposed to be in direct contact but can’t help to do just that. In the real world what is and what ought to be, are not synonymous. Laws
passed, rules written have serious repercussions for businesses’ and industries’ bottom line. Businessmen can’t afford the luxury of government officials as foes, that’s a no-brainer. It’s also an eternal natural edict with enormous economic consequences. Meeting members of government, all of its branches, on friendly turf is the name of the game.

On the surface, industry or any concerned party is supposed to be able to make a case before a lawmaker, government official who is to decide with impartiality, taking into accounts all different factors. Lawmakers have also their own needs. They want to run political campaigns, an expensive proposition. Lobbying means finessing a way to meld these two needs with the veneer of plausible deniability. Deny quid pro quo when in fact every action is taken with the tacit understanding of a quid pro quo. All the ethical rules and entreaties will not change this paradigm. The most that can happen is to design ever more creative ways to make the flow of the money go from the spring to the estuary.

HD was joining an effort of blurring the lines of ethics, to satisfy vested interests on both parts. An effort relying on discretion as its mantra, best accomplished away from prying eyes, attentive ears. Being a people’s person, HD was itching to get into action, of the one-on-one type. He worked best talking and convincing folks. The tricks and technical wizardry he learned at the academy were means that complemented but would never supplant human contact. He got his wish on an assignment to convince a council in the New England area to authorize the construction of a shopping center near a bucolic park with rolling hills and a pristine river.

The council was made of six members, evenly split among Republicans, Democrats and Independents, four men and two women, one black man, the rest whites. HD’s assignment was simple and concise. He was to find a way to make the proposition a palatable construct to a motley crew, all the while to have as many stakeholders buy in. This was a challenge alright but one that would allow him to prove his mettle. It would also have him marshal his gray matter’s smarts to elaborate an ingenious plan.

HD spent the next week ensconced in the company’s resource center to build a dossier on the project. From his vantage, he had to synchronize all the moving parts. He read the local papers to get a feel for the mood of the locals about issues that mattered to them. Letters to the editor, Op-Eds, all types of bylines added their flavor to the mix. Analytics such as income distribution, economic activities, places of worships, benevolent associations, etc. were all looked at. He then focused on each council member to create a profile and find a point of entry for solicitation in the subtlest manner. Of course, the political angle was the low-hanging fruit. Two of the council members were facing an election. A campaign contribution was in order. Another council member’s church was in the midst of renovation from flood damage and was actively raising funds. One member was an atheist and renown environmentalist. This would be a significant stumbling block. The last member doubled as mayor of a small hamlet facing a downturn of its economy due to globalization. It used to have a shoe manufacturing capacity that was crippled once the company decided to move it overseas for cheap labor.

A local polarization existed among environmentalists and those willing to go forward with development. The scope of his work would have to involve the skeptics in and out of government. At the same time, the project itself would have to include enough features to avoid a cleavage with the local ecology; it should incorporate the idea of man living in harmony with his environment. He wanted to showcase the fact that man didn’t live by ideas alone but needed to put bread on the table. Pragmatism was necessary for survival. Little by little, an outline of the master plan was forming in his head. He had to see the architectural team to discuss the ecology-friendly bent it needed to have to assuage sure to come opposition. He also needed to have a scholarly assessment of the economic windfall of having the mall at that location. Tax ratable increases to fill the coffers of localities ought to be a potent argument. Jobs created and related services spawned had to be part of the narrative. Content as well as delivery would be competing for maximum impact. PR would have to be at the forefront of this endeavor. He figured he would have to come up with catchy sound bites redolent of the simplicity and attractiveness of “YES WE CAN,” to encapsulate the project. The question is, will he pull it off?

(to be continued)

Reynald Altéma, MD
INTRODUCTION
Myocardial infarction with concomitant aortic dissection has a poor prognosis. A prompt, accurate diagnosis and management are fundamentals to survival since aortic dissection can be the etiology of a myocardial infarction and anticoagulation or thrombolytic treatment can result in catastrophic results.

We report a case of a 59-years-old male who presented to the Emergency Department with signs and symptoms of myocardial infarction (MI) and was found having concomitantly DeBakey type 1 aortic dissection (AD). The patient underwent a cardiac catheterization where his right coronary artery was maintained open and was transferred for a successful surgery of his aortic dissection.

TEACHING POINTS
The incenting event in aortic dissection is a tear in the aortic intima. AD and MI can coexist as a dissecting membrane can have retrograde propagation and may extend into a coronary ostium.

20% of patients with type A dissection have ECG evidence of acute ischemia or AMI.

ST Elevation in II, III and AVF suggests inferior wall infarction and right sided EKG leads should be performed to evaluate for right ventricular infarction.

Patient with suspected aortic dissection and EKG evidence of ischemia must undergo diagnostic imaging before thrombolytic.

CASE PRESENTATION
The patient is a 59-years-old male with no significant past medical history who came to the ED one hour after he developed a sudden onset, substernal and pressure-like chest pain radiating to the left arm. On admission, vitals were BP 99/46, HR 65, RR 16, T 37.1 and SaO2 91%. Physical exam was unremarkable. Given his type I respiratory failure, he was intubated. An EKG showed ST Elevation on II, III, AVF leads. Cardiac cath showed a type 1 aortic dissection and a severe aortic insufficiency. The right coronary artery was also noted to have a dissecting lawyer of 1cm.

The laboratory tests revealed a normal serum troponin T, the CBC count and BMP were unremarkable. Chest Xray was unrevealing and transthoracic echocardiography showed an ascending aortic dissection.

The patient was transferred to the OR where he had a PCI with DES in his RCA which got opened with the contrast. 3 hours later, he underwent an emergent surgical repair of his dissection and an aortic valve replacement with a composite biologic valve Hemashield conduit with a 25 mm Magna Ease Edwards valve and Hemashield graft.

He tolerated very well the procedure. However, after the surgery, he had a brief cardiac arrest requiring CPR resuscitation. The patient recovers successfully, gradually improved and was discharged 12 days later.

DISCUSSION
AD is the most common catastrophe of the aorta. The 2week mortality rate approaches 75% in patients with undiagnosed ascending AD. One of the serious complications of type A aortic dissection is coronary malperfusion, which can be rarely complicated with acute myocardial function in 1% to 2% of the cases.
In a retrospective analysis, Hirata et al reported cases of aortic dissection associated by EKG signs of myocardial ischemia. It is fundamental to be aware of concomitant morbidities and for our patient, he just had symptoms of MI, not of AD. Therefore, not all STEMI are AMI only.

Treatment of a MI with AD is very challenging. Cannesson et al found that anticoagulation and thrombolysis double hemorrhagic complications and mortality and can result in mortality ranges from 69% to 100%. In our case, no thrombolytics were given before the intervention.

Treatment options include open replacement of the damaged section of the aorta with reimplantation of arteries with or without valve replacement depending upon the location and extent of the AD. For our patient, he was stabilized first by stenting his RCA then aortic dissection surgery with valve replacement

**CONCLUSION**

AD is the most common life-threatening disorder affecting the aorta and can be associated with inferior wall MI. Therefore, an urgent cardiac catheterization is always required to rule out coronary malperfusion. It is fundamental to distinguish acute MI, for which thrombolytic therapy may be life saving, from AD, in which thrombolytic therapy may be fatal.

Even with the current Door to Balloon standards for STEMI (90 minutes), it is essential to be vigilant with the differentials for AMI even with STEMI.
Garly R Saint Croix MD, one of our cardiology fellow at the division of Cardiology, Columbia University at Mount Sinai Medical Center in florida, was accepted in a position for an interventional Cardiology fellowship at Montefiore/Einstein. The AMHE is happy and expect to follow his advancements waiting for his teaching points at our annual conventions. Congratulations Garly and be sure to enter in contact with Alix Dufresnes MD in Brooklyn NY at Interfaith and Presbiterian Hospitals. Congratulations are in order.

Maxime Coles MD
Il est tres facile de fouiller dans l’ancien calendrier Romain pour decouvrir l’existence d’un festival païen qui honorait le dieu Saturne. Saturne était le dieu romain de l’agriculture et il était représenté comme un vieillard courbe sous le poids de l’âge, tenant une faucille dans la main droite pour démontrer comment il présidait le temps. Il est parfois représenté avec un voile impénétrable relatant des temps obscurs, un peu comme il est coutume de le comparer au dieu allemand “Odin”. L’écrivain Plutarque écrit pour nous faire comprendre que le visage de Saturne était voilé parce qu’il représentait aussi le père de la Vérité.

Saturne est responsable de cet état de “regenerescence du monde” quand le monde entier était menacé de destruction pendant le solstice d’hiver. Cet aspect de destruction de l’ordre actuel permet d’expliquer les Saturnales. Saturne serait présenté comme un civilisateur et inventeur des lois et de l’agriculture. Les Romains l’identifieront au dieu grecque Chronos et il sera le père de Jupiter (Zeus), Pluton (Hades), Neptune (Posseion), Junon (Hera), Vesta (Hestia) and Ceres(Demeter), en guise de rappel mythologique. Les poètes latins Ovide et Virgile parlent bien de la condition de Saturne, qui est dethrone par son fils Jupiter (Zeus), et reduit à la condition de simple mortel. Il se voit alors obligé de se refugier dans le Latium en Italie ou il rencontrera le dieu des seuils Janua avec qui il re-inventera l’âge d’or. La, il engendra un autre fils, Picus.

La cruauté de Saturne a aussi été renforcée par son identification à Chronos qui est connu pour avoir devore ses propres enfants. Il est assimilé aussi au dieu carthaginois Ba’rai Hammon a qui des enfants on été sacrifiés et a Yahweh dont le Sabbat est appelé “Saturni dies” dans un poème de Tibulius. Il y a eu aussi un Saturne africain, comme un dieu supreme et universel au quatrième siècle.

On lui attribuait la protection des semailles mais cette étymologie est aujourd’hui abandonnée ainsi que son status de dieu agraire qui le rendait inactif pendant la majeure partie de l’année. Son nom jadis était interprété comme la “semence”. Une periode de festivite qui s’appelait “Saturnalia”, lui était dedicée. Ces activités se deroulaient a la mi-décembre, commençant précisément le 17 décembre et d’après ce calendrier Julien, le fete de Noel tombait exactement le 25 décembre. Beaucoup de traditions associees a la fete de Noel, nous viennent de cette periode.

Cette fete, tres populaire expose des rituels de fermiers pendant le solstice d’hiver a la fin de la Republique (133-31 B.C.). La coutume voulait que chacun presente des offrandes ou faiisait des sacrifices aux dieux a cette occasion. Saturnalia etait telle que les activites de travail etaient completement suspendues pour permettre aux membres du gouvernement, au monde des affaires ainsi qu’aux etudiants de respecter ce jour consacre a Saturne. La majorite des participants profitaient pour decorer leur maison et pour s’habiller en toges traditionelles, bien coloriees, les “syntheses”. Meme les esclaves avaient le droit de profiter du jour sans etre obliges de travailler. Cela leur permettait de participer aux festivities mondaines du moment et parfois meme, de partager la table de festin avec leurs proprietaires.

Ce jour, dedie a Saturne, etait vu comme un jour de rejeouissance et les Romains passaient leur temps a jouer de la musique, a chanter, ou a feter avec leurs amis. Ils se faisaient des echanges de cadeaux, specialement une petite figurine en forme de bougies qui representait le prochain retour de la lumiere apres le solstice de Decembre. Ces figurines ont pris le nom de “signillaria”, mais cette coutume date du temps ou des sacrifices humains etaient de rigeur. Ces sacrifices a Saturne etaient accomplis selon des rituels grecques, a tete decouverte contrairement aux rites des autres divinites romaines, qui etaient executes avec la tete couverte (capite velato). Un poete romain du nom de Catullus a eu a decrire cette periode de l’annee comme la plus belle saison alors que d’autres qui recherchaient le comfort et le silence, se construisaient des enclos a l’abri de tout bruit afin de se concentrer pour ecrire, comme l’auteur Pliny l’a bien decrit dans ses ouvrages.

Un nouveau temple a Rome, dedie au dieu Saturne, est construit dans l’enclos du Forum romain, certains le situent dans la section Nord-Ouest alors que d’autres confirment qu’il s’agissait du Sud-Ouest, durant le quatrième siècle, pour servir de site ceremonial pour les celebrations de la Saturnalia. Pour cette occasion, un jeune porc est generallement sacrifie publiquement. Dans leur foyer, chez la majorite des romains, un roi-charlatan est choisi pour represtenoter un “chef” de la Saturnalia, parfois il est aussi appele
“Lord Misrule”. Cette entité portait des vêtements de clown et vociférait des insultes aux visiteurs ou taquinait les enfants ou les femmes dans le but de créer une atmosphère chaotique pendant les célébrations. Ils pouvaient aussi cacher des pièces de monnaie dans tous les coins de la maison ou même des petits objets dans les gateaux.

On se demandait toujours comment que la Saturnalia ait pu engendrer La fête de Noël (Christmas) d’abord en Europe, durant la période s’étendant du deuxième au quatrième siècle A.D., en passant par les coutumes Celtes, puis les traditionnelles célébrations de la Saturnalia à nos jours, au milieu de l’hiver. La fête de Noël nous vient des anciennes coutumes romaines. La bible ne précise pas non plus quand Jésus est né et paradoxallement, alors que quelques théologiens prônent qu’il est né au printemps à cause des bergers et des moutons qui fleurissaient la scène de la Nativité. Toujours est-il qu’à la fin du quatrième siècle, les églises chrétiennes décidèrent de célébrer la fête de Noël, le 25 décembre, parallèlement aux fêtes de Saturnalia.

Les chrétiens et les païens ont toujours coexisted tant bien que mal pendant cette période mais il a fallu que les Romains acceptent le Christianisme comme une religion officielle de Rome pour normaliser la situation. C’est pour cette raison que des échanges de cadeaux, l’utilisation des bougies, les chants de noël sont devenues des traditions populaires, partagées pendant la fête de Noël. Ces traditions m’ont toujours intrigué et ont poussé ma curiosité à rechercher la relation entre ces périodes du temps.

J’espère que tout un chacun prendra plaisir à découvrir les similarités entre la Saturnalia d’un passé lointain et les fêtes de Noël de notre temps. Comment ne pas encore plus apprécier cette fête alors que chez nous, durant ma jeunesse, c’est une saison qui nous incitait à créer des fanaux et des lampadaires. Nous ne pouvons imaginer une fête de Noël sans un arbre de noël qu’on découvre en famille avec soin et encore plus, le décorer et l’illuminer faisait le Bonheur de toute la maison. Le besoin de le garnir d’une crèche, nous restera gravé au fond du cœur comme un moment solennel dans l’existence de tout un chacun.

Aux Etats-Unis, certes, au fur et à mesure, chacune des 13 originales colonies ont du se mettre d’accord avant d’assimiler la notion de Fête de Noël. Dans un état comme le Massachusetts par exemple, la Noël était illégale. Avec le temps, le Père Noël a su tirer sa révérence en faisant sa première apparition dans tous les foyers avec des petits sacs remplis de “cadeaux familiers”.

Maxime Coles MD
Boca Raton FL

References:

1- Saturnalia, Ancient History Encyclopedia
3- Franscisco Goya (1746-1828): Saturne : Saturne dévorant un de ses fils, une des Peintures noires, peinte entre 1819 et 1823, directement sur les murs de sa maison dans les environs de Madrid, transférée sur une toile après sa mort et exposée depuis au Musée du Prado a Madrid.
4- Jean-Baptiste Mauzaisse (1784-1844): Le temps montrant les ruines qu’il amène et les chefs-d’œuvre qu’il laisse ensuite découvrir, 1822, plafond pour la salle des Bijoux au Louvre.
Dear Colleagues,

The primary function of the AMHE Foundation as we all know it, is to build capital and to garnish resources to fulfill the philanthropic activities of the AMHE and its members. Your contributions and those of the larger public remain the capital engine for these activities. We always dream indeed of an organization known for its relevance, which cannot be done however without sacrifices.

We want every member of this association to take pride in the current achievements of the AMHE Foundation, and to recognize his or her personal contribution in each one of them.

Here to name a few:
- The Resident Scholarship program being run by Dr Paul Nacier and his team at the Brooklyn hospital for the benefit of our young graduates from Haiti
- The Medical Students Cafeteria Program, eminently managed up to recently by Dr Fritz Apollon, and designed to contribute to the nourishment of the students at the State University of Haiti School of Medicine
- The Justinien Hospital program in Cap-Haitien, where support for the hospital physical Infrastructure, medical care and medical education are provided in a big way, thanks to the tireless effort of Dr. Louis Auguste.

Hitherto, dedicated fund-raising activities have allowed the foundation to partially meet the cost of these projects, with the minimal estimated yearly obligations of:
- $15,000.00 for the Students Cafeteria Program
- $20,000.00 for the Resident Scholarship Program
- $30,000 for the Restructuration project of the Justinien Hospital.

Furthermore, there will always be a Dorian-like event or another climatic disaster around the corner, and without previously allocated emergency or disaster relief funds, our reaction will continue to be too slow.

If this is not convincing enough, think about the ongoing Covid19 related commitments of the AMHE and the AMHE Foundation.

But these dedicated fund-raising activities have fallen short of helping us meet the commitments enumerated above or even less undertake visionary programs that will propel the Foundation forward and let it embrace newer challenges.

To shore up our budget, further consolidate our resources, and enable us to fulfill the vision spelled above, we are respectfully soliciting you, our colleagues to abide by a new commitment for a modest monthly contribution from $50.00 to $250.00.

Pledging is easy and effortless. Please report to the AMHEFoundation.org Donate page, at the online donation section to carry on your good instincts. Whence there, follow the instructions to select your level of participation, the monthly schedule from the drop-down menu, and give your PayPal, debit or credit card information. You can even leave a note to indicate your program of choice or to suggest newer ones you may want the foundation to embrace.

We are inviting you as engaged citizens to do the best you can. The cause is right and just.

AMHE Foundation Executive Committee
L’année 2020 a été vécue comme une période très difficile nationalement sur beaucoup de points. Pourtant, Info CHIR a su maintenir son cap, agrandir la communauté et même créer un nouveau périodique, l’IGM.

Info CHIR,
Une année de progrès

RHCA
INFO GAZETTE MEDICALE

L-F TELEMAQUE  Coordonnateur
Janvier 2021

Cliquer sur l’image pour voir la revue en entier
C'est avec infiniment de peine que nous annonçons le départ de Pologne Therese Estimable Garçon vers son Créateur. Notre ami Francelot Moïse MD, son fils, glorifie son passage sur terre et si sa mission est terminée, elle nous laisse quatre fils éplorés pour combler un vide. Je prend l'occasion tant en mon nom personnel qu'en celui de L'Association Médicale Haïtienne à l'étranger (AMHE) pour présenter nos sincères condoléances à leurs épouses, spécialement notre amie Kelitha, aux enfants et petits-enfants, et à tous les membres de la famille et amis affectés par cette perte. Bon voyage Pologne Therese et que la terre te soit légère.

Maxime Coles MD

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**My Mamma Po**

*By Johanna Moïse (1-20-21)*

My ancestral tree has roots so strong they fortify the ground this world walks on.

I smell orange peels when I dream
And you are there, smiling over the bridge of your glasses.

the last time I saw you
I was afraid you’d melted away in the tub child’s play.

My ancestral tree has roots so strong they fortify the ground this world walks on.

they know the swells of this man’s back.
Headstrong branches 6 feet, widespread,
the promise of opportunity to give back to the soil from whence he came.

we’ve gained another root,
the first of my time.

while the tree is known to be stronger,
the man and his branches have wilted.

loss is a white rose bush akin to a lantern that burns for your name.

love is the journey of those branches stretching towards the sun anyways.

there will always be a place to rest in the shade of our tree; there will always be ground to walk on. and we must.

va plus loin
means go further.
her favorite song it is the voice of a promise we are meant to keep.

Time makes me feel selfish.
Le départ
Maxime Coles MD

Je suis triste et je rêve tout éveillé
Dans une envie de me blottir dans ses bras,
Pour m’approcher de son corps doux et chaud,
Tel un lézard qui s’enfile à la recherche d’un terrier.

Je la sens respirer dans un petit gemissement
Alors que je m’enlace à ses seins.
Je vis à la douceur de son être
Quand à l’abandon, elle soupire doucement.

J’arpente ces mamelons en y posant mon front.
Pour caresser une peau lisse et luisante
Puis je m’endors en la serrant fort
Comme si c’était ma dernière nuit sur terre.

Je cherche la douceur de notre lit
Pour mieux reposer ma tête sur ses épaules.
Et je veux l’aimer encore plus,
Mais je crains de gacher son sommeil.

Je me sens m’endormir tout doucement
Comme embaumé par son parfum.
Je me laisse fermer les paupières
Pour rester immobile jusqu’au lendemain,

J’écoute la chanson du vent, dans la nuit.
Je me sens heureux et je souris avec joie
Car je ne voudrais pas paraître triste
Avant mon départ pour toujours.

Ste Croix Virgin Islands
12-28-2020
Announcements

Happy New Year 2021!

On behalf of the AHDH Executive Committee, we are pleased to share the many successes and challenges of 2020. Thank you for your continued support over the past 34 years.

Because of the unavailability of air transportation, we canceled the 2020 Summer Mission. However, on November 27, 2020, we completed the Winter Mission.

Our 40 ft. container of medical supplies has finally arrived at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, after some New Orleans port delays. Thank you to all of our friends and volunteers!

We have reached 75% of our goal to complete the outpatient clinic with the Hospital St. Joseph of La Vallée-de-Jacmel, Haiti. Thank you for your continuing support.

Upcoming Events

January 2021

Board Meeting

March 5-13, 2021

Team 1 Medical Mission Trip

March 13-20, 2021

Team 2 Medical Mission Trip

Volunteers, please contact Dr. Charles Rene at charlesrene66@bellsouth.net to join upcoming mission trips.

Cliquer sur l’image pour voir la revue en entier
Published on the AMHE NY Facebook and AMHE Facebook page last two weeks
Articles parus sur la page Facebook de l'AMHE NY et de l’AMHE durant la dernière semaine

Methotrexate Treatment and Risk for Interstitial Lung Disease or Respiratory Failure in Rheumatoid Arthritis - Leyla McCalla d'origine haïtienne et Langston Hughes MC - Spine Anatomy Overview Video - Judith Madsen Regroupement des Poètes Haïtiens Engagés, Membre du Regroupement des PFELP - Que devez vous savoir de l'Afrique..Boswana.... Maxime Coles - Ste Croix, VI a visiter. MC - [Fabrique littéraire] Beaubrun Ardouin est "l'autre historien", l'anti-Madiou. - RedCross PAP Jazz volunteers - Pfizer: Our Vaccine Likely Blocks COVID Variant

And more…

Abonnez-vous à l'infolettre
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Le Newsletter est publié toutes les 3 semaines.
Prochaine parution: 15 février 2021