

## Correspondence



S. b B., 40-year-old Malay. Occipito-mental view of the skull showing a fairly typical pattern of insertion of 'charm needles' in the face. Three were placed in the forehead, centrally and above the eyebrows and a pair into each cheek.

### 'CHARM NEEDLES'

Dear Sir,

I was interested to read the article entitled "Some radiological observations on the practice of insertion of 'charm needles'" (Soo and Singh, 1972), which appeared in the September 1972 issue.

The practice of inserting 'charm needles'

is quite widespread in Singapore and in one year alone (1970), I made a personal collection of 42 cases from casualty subjects on whom skull radiographs were taken. The analysis of these subjects in terms of age, sex and race is presented below, bearing in mind, of course, that the number studied was small.

The practice was found to be curiously commoner in the males, seen only in adults and mainly in those in the fourth and fifth decades. Malays resorted to this practice more frequently than other ethnic groups if these figures are viewed on a proportionate racial basis.

Contrary to what Drs. Soo and Singh reported, there appeared to be a pattern of needle insertion in the face. One, two or three needles were usually introduced in the forehead, either centrally and/or above each eyebrow. Commonly, there were two needles, one in either cheek. There was also one at the point of the mandible; in its place or in combination, there was a needle on each side of the lower jaw. (Fig. 1).

On the average, 3 or 4 needles were inserted in the face but the number ranged from 1 to 47 (Fig. 2). There were in fact 14 cases with a single needle. The needles used were usually fine ones though there was an occasional case in which the needles were thick and resembled gramophone needles.

This was a purely radiological study made when I was attached to the Outram Road General Hospital. The subjects in the series were not interviewed. However, I subscribe to the view of Drs. Soo and Singh that the practice was carried out for beautification purposes or in the belief that the needles conferred a curative effect on certain ailments.

*Yours faithfully,*

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C.S.H., 21-year-old female Chinese. P.A. and lateral views of the face showing an extreme example of needle insertion. A total of 47 needles was implanted in both cheeks by a sinseh for treatment of typhoid.

**Reference**

Soo, Y.S. and Singh, J. (1972). "Some radiological observations on the practice of insertion of 'charm needles'". 27: 40-42.

**Age, Sex and Racial Distribution**

Years	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60
No.	7	18	14	3
Males	28			
Females	14			
Chinese	25			
Males	14			
Indians	3			

**CORRIGENDUM**

In the article "An outbreak of rabies in West Malaysia in 1970 with unusual laboratory observations" by Dora S.K. Tan et al in the December 1972 issue (Vol. XXVII No. 2), some of the pages were wrongly numbered. The pages of the article should have been:

First page	=	Page 107
Second page	=	Page 112 not 108
Third page	=	Page 113 not 109
Fourth page	=	Page 110
Fifth page	=	Page 111
Sixth page	=	Page 108 not 112
Seventh page	=	Page 109 not 113
Eighth page	=	Page 114