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words

Catatonia

Max Fink & Michael A. Taylor

Catatonia, a motor dysregulation syndrome, was described by Karl Kahlbaum in 1874. Emil Kraepelin buried catatonia in schizophrenia, where it has been ignored for more than a century. When looked for today, catatonia is found in 10% of acute psychiatric admissions, most often in persons with mood disorder or toxicity. Catatonia is readily diagnosable, verifiable by a lorazepam challenge test, and eminently and rapidly treatable even in its lethal forms, with lorazepam or electroconvulsive therapy. Prompt recognition and treatment saves lives. It is time to bury schizophrenia, catatonic type and resurrect catatonia into its own home in the psychiatric classification.

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