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Food for thought

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The history of eponyms in obstetrics and gynecology is rich and long (1). Eponyms are here to stay (2,3).

Distinguishing whether the entry of Sonic the Hedgehog, the video game, cartoon, comic strip, and film character, along with his great nemesis, Dr Ivo Robotnik, into the medical world is frivolous or dignified is largely a matter of personal taste, as well as is the use of other eponyms

in medicine (4-6). However, analogies are a very important aspect in various areas of life and the use of analogies in medicine is no exception. Food-related medical analogies, like other analogies, assist with naming, learning, remembering, reasoning, and consequently practice (7). Despite their importance, medical literature only occasionally deals with food-related medical metaphors. The beauty of these culinary medical terms lies in the fact that their use is gen-

TABLE 1. Cherry-picked food-related medical metaphors in obstetrics and gynecology

| Analogy | Class | Brief description |
|--------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Almond-shaped ovaries | fruit | female gonads akin to almonds in shape (8) |
| Banana sign | fruit | shape of fetal cerebellum on ultrasound scan suggestive of spina bifida (9) |
| Bean-shaped G spot | legume | controversial erogenous zone located on anterior vaginal wall (10) |
| Cauliflower warts | vegetable | condyloma acuminata shape (11) |
| Chocolate cyst | confectionary | ovarian endometriosis, color of old blood (12) |
| Cone biopsy | dessert | cervical conisation for malignancy (13) |
| Cottage cheese appearance | dairy | thick white curds in vulvovaginal candidiasis similar to look of cheese (14) |
| Crab | sea food | pubic lice – <i>phthirus pubis</i> (15) |
| Fish flesh appearance | sea food | of leiomyosarcoma (16) |
| Fishy odor | sea food | fish odor in bacterial vaginosis due to trimethylamine (17) |
| Fourchette – little fork | utensil | fork-shaped posterior junction of labia minora (18) |
| Grape-like vesicles | fruit | molar pregnancy, trophoblastic tissue resembles grape clusters (19) |
| Lemon sign | fruit | concave frontal bones on ultrasound scan giving the fetal skull a lemon appearance, suggestive of spina bifida (20) (Figure 1) |
| Milk leg | dairy | <i>phlegmasia alba dolens</i> , more common in pregnancy (21) |
| Morula – mulberry | fruit | 16-32 cell stage fertilized ovum (22) |
| Omental cake | confectionary | tumor infiltration of omentum classically arising from ovarian carcinoma - cake is visible on radiologic investigations (23) |
| Peach fuzz in anorexia nervosa | fruit | serious eating disorder commonly affecting young women (24) |
| Pear-shaped uterus | fruit | pear-shaped internal sex organ (8) |
| Placenta – flat cake | confectionary | disc-shaped organ, name derived from Latin root for a flat cake (25) |
| Port-wine amniotic fluid | drink | color of amniotic fluid sometimes found with placental abruption (26) |
| Sarcoma botryoides | fruit | malignant tumor which may affect the vagina usually in children and is grape-shaped (botryoid) (27) |
| Strawberry cervix | fruit | cervical bleeding in spotted pattern due to trichomoniasis (28) |
| Strawberry-shaped skull | fruit | sonographic marker of serious fetal abnormality such as trisomy 18 (29) |
| Swiss-cheese endometrium | dairy | cystic endometrial hyperplasia (30) |
| Waiter's tip deformity | serve food | brachial plexus upper trunk lesion because of difficult delivery (31) |
| Wharton's jelly | dessert | Wharton's jelly of the umbilical cord which is gelatinous (32) |

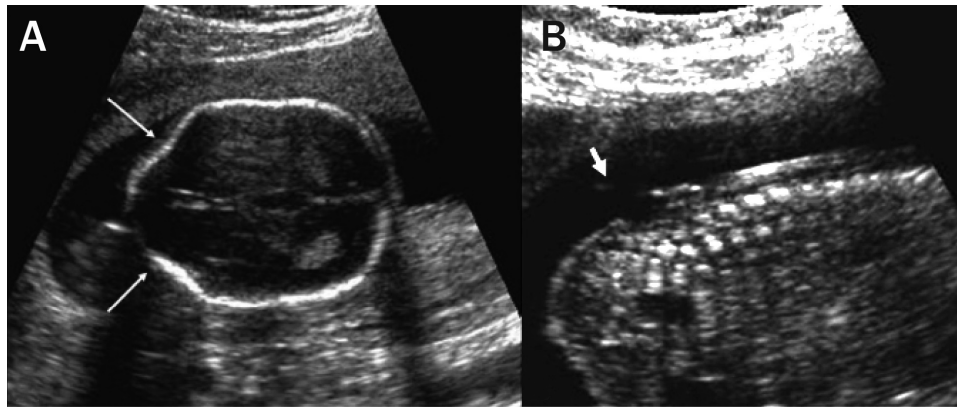


FIGURE 1. Lemon sign. Axial sonographic image of the fetal head at the level of the biparietal diameter (A) shows inward concavity of both frontal bones (arrows) instead of the normally seen convexity. This gives the head the appearance of a lemon. Sagittal sonographic image of the fetus (B) shows a meningomyelocele (thick arrow) in the lumbar region. Reproduced with kind permission of the Indian Journal of Radiology and Imaging (33).

erally idiosyncratic, random, and inconsistent, and is influenced by time, place, and culture (2).

Presented is an admittedly cherry-picked list of fascinating food-related medical terms in obstetrics and gynecology to whet the appetite (Table 1). We are only human and deserve some comic relief (34,35). Food for thought.

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