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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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### **Exertional Heat Illness**

In their comprehensive survey of exertional heat illness (EHI) (2002;148;11-18) Booker and Bricknell cite from a paper of mine to the effect that malignant hyperthermia (MH) is sufficiently rare that only about one officer cadet will have entered the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst with the defective gene since the end of the Second World War.

I now believe that I based this estimate on a simplistic, if widespread, interpretation of the genetics of MH and that my assertion was almost certainly wrong. Family studies suggest heterogeneity for the condition with incomplete expression. Responsible geno-

types may be much more frequent than originally suspected. Moreover there is evidence that the genotype may sometimes be expressed by the two phenotypes of MH and EHI. Thus there is almost certainly a subset, of uncertain size, of soldiers who are peculiarly at risk for EHI.

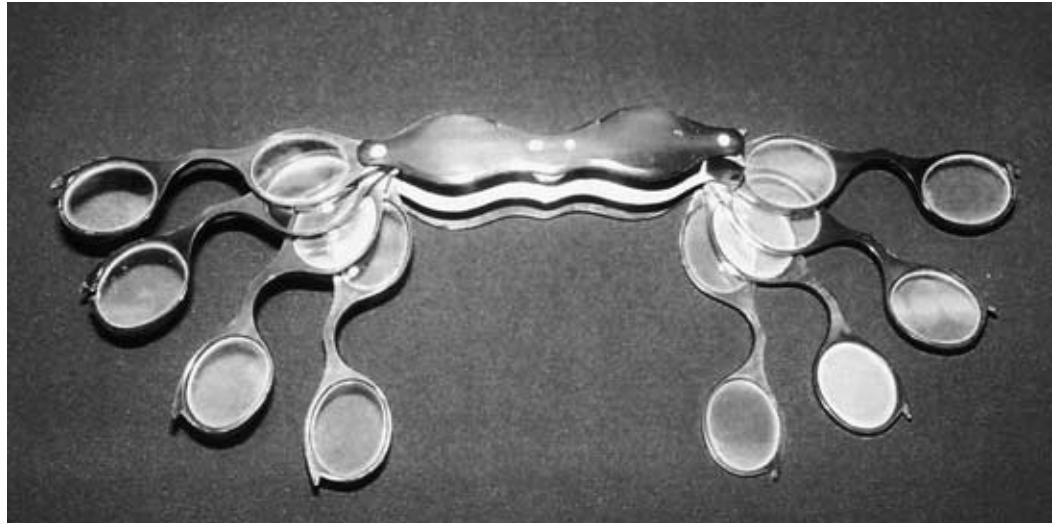
I have discussed these issues in more detail in a paper provisionally accepted by *Military Medicine*.

I am etc.  
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**VIGNETTE**

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**18th Century Eye Testing Spectacles**

It is believed that spectacles were discovered in the early 14th century, most probably by Armati of Florence.

The testing spectacles illustrated were the property of Pierre de Sales La Terriere of Trois Riviers, Quebec, Canada. He studied medicine in Canada and subsequently at St Thomas's Hospital, where he became

MRCs. He previously served as a Surgeon in the Voltigeurs Canadiens, during the war of 1812. Whilst at St Thomas's, he attended wounded from the Peninsular Wars.

These spectacles were purchased at auction.

PH Starling  
Curator AMS Museum