



## Letter to the Editor

### The forward-looking advertising. Description of a gouty heart in an advertisement published in 1919



The association between gout and cardiovascular diseases is well demonstrated [1,2]. In keeping, the most important international recommendations suggest to carefully consider this aspect for both the diagnosis and management of gout [3,4]. However, the causes of this relevant cardiovascular risk (CVR) are not completely clarified. The most current hypotheses suggest that a major role may be played by indirect causes, due to the frequent association of gout with diseases in turn characterized by a high CVR, such as hypertension, chronic renal diseases and metabolic diseases, including mainly diabetes [5]. However, an increasing body of evidences demonstrates that urate crystals may have a direct role on the CVR, subsequently to their deposition in arterial walls, including coronary artery [6]. There are few doubts that these observations are recent and only anecdotally hypothesized in the past.

It is therefore surprising to find these aspects in an old French advertising dating back to 1919, (Fig. 1), where the heart involvement in gout was emphasized by some particular expressions such

as "le cœur urique" (gouty heart) and "Ne laissez pas les cristaux d'acide urique s'installer dans le muscle et les soupapes du cœur ni dans la parois des vaisseaux" (Do not let install the uric acid crystals in the muscle and heart valves nor in the vascular walls). The product of this old advertising was Urodonal, a popular proprietary medicinal made by the "établissements Chatelein" from Paris and indicated for its solvent action on uric acid. Urodonal was a mixture of hexamine, lysidine, sidonal and sodium bicarbonate and it was considered the most representative product of Hexamine family, which was included in the rich list of substances or products used for the medicinal treatment of chronic arthritis, although without clear evidence [7].

However as showed (Fig. 1), the Doctor's Daurian considerations inside the advertising message were not entirely uncorrected. We could also consider them forward-looking, given that the first papers on "Gouty Heart" were published by EE Pund in 1960 [8] and in France, by J Chabot in 1963 [9].

We believe that this particular observation teaches us that we should take care a little more of the advertisements that look at our patients even without our knowledge, because they can influence them in decisive way on their adherence to treatment.



**Fig. 1.** Advertising published in 1919 about medical properties of Urodonal a medical mixture containing Hexamine indicated as uric acid solvent. Among the most interesting aspects there were the definition of "Uric heart" (coeur urique) and the recommendation: "do not let install the uric acid crystals in the muscle and heart valves nor in the vascular walls". (Ne laissez pas les cristaux d'acide urique s'installer dans le muscle et les soupapes du cœur ni dans les parois des vaisseaux).

## Disclosure of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interest.

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