Neurological Vignette

Pott’s Spinal Caries: Pott’s Paraplegia

J.M.S. Pearce
Emeritus Consultant Neurologist, Department of Neurology, Hull Royal Infirmary, Hull, UK

Percivall Pott (1714–1788), surgeon to St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, is generally credited with the first detailed account of spinal tuberculosis. He described in 1779 [1] and in 1782 [2] (fig. 1) a triad of paravertebral abscess associated with kyphosis and paraplegia.

References

1 Pott P: Remarks on that kind of palsy of the lower limb which is frequently found to accompany a curvature of the spine – London, 1779; in Medical Classics. Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, 1936, vol 1, pp 271–323.

Fig. 1. Pott’s description of paraplegia in 1782 (above) and 1779 (below); Percivall Pott.

Pott P. Remarks on useless state of the lower limb in consequence of a curvature of the spine, being a supplement to a former treatise on that subject. London, Johnson, 1782.