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Bilateral auto-enucleation: A case report

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Objectives: To present a case of bilateral auto-enucleation in a 75-year-old male Nigerian - a rare occurrence in the elderly.

Method: Report of a male patient that plucked out his 2 eyes.

Result: A 75-year-old man presented at Guinness Eye Centre Onitsha, having plucked out his 2 eyes a day earlier. His wife reported that he was behaving abnormally who had recently; when she came to bring breakfast she saw her husband's 2 eyes on the floor and bleeding from the 2 eyes. Both patient and wife were living alone and no one came to their house that morning. The patient said he gouged out his eyes in obedience to a voice urging him to do soothed couple recently lost their only male child.

Examination showed a fully conscious, calm elderly man with normal vital signs, bilateral lid and periorbital oedema, chemosis and disorganised orbits with absence of the eye balls. His wife brought a polythene bag containing neatly wrapped two intact eyeballs, each with about 5cm of attached optic nerve.

Conclusion: Although auto-enucleation is not common among ophthalmic patients in Nigerians, this report should alert medical practitioners of this devastating ophthalmic consequence of neglected psychiatric disorder in the elderly.

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