tortuosity, nor did not perform any regression analysis, as is stated in the above letter. Rather we have analyzed the US scan and multiple CT scan measurements for the same aneurysm, in an attempt to quantify the differences that exist and to provide guidance on how to measure aneurysm diameter in the context of currently recommended reporting standards, and of previous trials on which decisions to intervene are based.

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Why is the last name of William Stewart Halsted misspelled as “Halstead”?

To keep the following in proper perspective, one might ask why the mistake in spelling the last name of William Stewart Halsted continues to be made as frequently as can be documented. The title of the informative and interesting Surgical Ethics Challenges by Dr Lois A. Killewich is, “The Impaired Surgeon: Revisiting Halstead” in the Journal of Vascular Surgery (2009;50:440-1). It is unfortunate that the last name is misspelled three more times as “Halstead” in the text as it is in the title, continuing to perpetuate the misspelling of the last name of William Stewart Halsted, who made his many valuable contributions to surgery in general at the Johns Hopkins Hospital.1

Because we hosted the 83rd Annual Meeting of the Halsted Society in Bethesda, Maryland/Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, September 23-26, 2009, I am sensitive to the correct spelling of the last name of William Stewart Halsted. All too often, members of our support staff choose the spelling of “Halstead,” much to my frustration. Even more ironically, the misspelling of Halsted’s last name has been made in recent years at the Annual Meeting of the Halsted Society itself, with one of the gifts given to attending members as a memento with Halsted last name spelled “Halstead.” I have noted over the years that the misspelling of Halsted’s last name can be identified in a number of other publications.

We in medicine strive for accuracy and the truth. Appreciating that Halsted is widely known as the “Father of American Surgical Education,” we should do all that we can to ensure that his name is spelled correctly. I have had a 45-year struggle trying to convince my colleagues that the term “shrapnel” is one of the most misused terms in the English language.2 The answer given to me, frequently, is that usage can make change. I doubt that anyone would want to change the spelling of the last name of Halsted.

My first hero was Otto E. Utzinger, an Arizona mining town physician who actually delivered me, who was a 1914 Johns Hopkins graduate. He taught me about Halsted and Holman when I was still in high school. However, I still made a typographical error about 35 years ago. I received a letter from Dr C. Rollins Hanlon as the Director of our American College of Surgeons at the time, pointing out to me that, yes, there was a Dr Halstead; however, he had practiced in the Midwest many years ago. Dr Hanlon encouraged me, as I now encourage the readership of the JVS, to support the correct spelling of William Stewart Halsted’s last name.

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