**Is This Pathological?**

Jumoke Oladipo,1* Alex Racco,2 and Henry Simpkins1

**CASE DESCRIPTION**

A 74-year-old woman with toxic nodular goiter, diabetes mellitus, depression, gastroesophageal reflux disease, and hypercholesterolemia had routine serum protein electrophoresis done for the first time. Her medications included metformin, levothyroxine, sertraline, rosuvastatin, and rabeprazole. The patient’s renal function was normal. Serum protein electrophoresis was carried out by capillary electrophoresis (CAPILLARYS™; Sebia Electrophoresis). Immunofixation electrophoresis revealed no monoclonal immunoglobulin bands.

**QUESTIONS**

1. What is unusual about the electrophoretic pattern?
2. What is responsible for this anomaly?

*The answers are on the next page.*
1. The albumin peak is split; this phenomenon is known as bisalbuminemia or alloalbuminemia.

2. Bisalbuminemia is usually caused by an albumin variant that differs from the most common allotype, albumin A, by a single amino acid residue, thereby producing 2 albumin fractions of equal or unequal amounts. Inherited forms are usually discovered incidentally. The acquired form has been associated with multiple myeloma, chronic renal failure, pancreatitis, and use of cephalosporins and β-lactam antibiotics. Bisalbuminemia is better visualized with capillary electrophoresis.

Author Contributions: All authors confirmed they have contributed to the intellectual content of this paper and have met the following 3 requirements: (a) significant contributions to the conception and design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; (b) drafting or revising the article for intellectual content; and (c) final approval of the published article.

Authors’ Disclosures or Potential Conflicts of Interest: No authors declared any potential conflicts of interest.

Unveiling the Right Side

Mike Hallworth1*

“A massive luminous plasma sphere
By gravity made to cohere”.2
Thus Wikipedia dubs a star
(the sort that twinkle from afar).

But other stars are nearer found -
The hospital with them abounds
And none so bright as those you’ll see
At work down in Pathology.

Each day (and night) this expert crew
Test blood and wee and lumps and poo
C&S, FBC, biopsy and LFTs
We probe the causes of disease.

We tell you if your theatre’s clean
Or if there’s cancer in the spleen.
We look at things that can’t be seen
At cells and molecules and genes.

1 Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Shrewsbury, UK.
* Address correspondence to the author at: Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Mytton Oak Road, Shrewsbury, UK SY3 8XQ. Fax +44-1743-261159; e-mail mike.hallworth@sath.nhs.uk.

This poem was written for UK National Poetry Day, 2012. The theme was “stars,” and our hospital invited contributions from the various wards and departments about their stars.

2 This quotation is adapted from “Star” at Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star).

DOI: 10.1373/clinchem.2012.197814