The Greeks have a word for it

To the Editors:

The Greek noun “penia” (poverty) is used in medical terminology to signify absence, lack or deficiency of some body constituent, *e.g.* leucopenia, thrombocytopenia. As these terms often follow anaemia (spelled with the diphthong “ae”, from “haema” for blood) in medical texts, they are occasionally (and wrongly) also spelled with “ae”. However, penia has nothing to do with haema in linguistic terms: it only requires a plain “e” [1]. Therefore, the noun “sarcopenia” (meaning “lack of flesh” in Greek) and the derived adjective “sarcopenic” in the paper by FRANSSEN *et al.* [2] should follow the same spelling rule. I sincerely hope that the authors of the paper in question will excuse this pedantic comment to their excellent work.

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STATEMENT OF INTEREST

None declared.

REFERENCES

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- 2 Franssen FME, Sauerwein HP, Rutten EPA, Wouters EFM, Schols AMWJ. Whole-body resting and exercise-induced lipolysis in sarcopaenic patients with COPD. *Eur Respir J* 2008; 32: 1466–1471.

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