



## CASE STUDY: ORNITHOPHOBIA

*Holly is a 32 year old woman who lives alone in rented accommodation. She has a fiancé, Noel, who lives nearby. Holly has a little-known condition called ornithophobia, which she has been reluctant to disclose. Noel decides to show her his true love one Christmas, and that's when her symptoms begin to appear.*

Ornithophobia (or a fear of birds) has an unfortunate seasonal peak whereby those afflicted can be subjected to an assault on their system. For Holly it started out quite innocently with a gift of a partridge in a pear tree. This was followed in subsequent days by two turtle doves, three French hens and four calling birds. Holly quickly became overwhelmed:



*"Quite frankly, all of those squawking birds are starting to get on my nerves."*

After a day's respite she then found herself faced with six geese a-laying and seven swans a-swimming which had far-reaching consequences in socio-economic terms, as well as giving her insomnia. She was referred to a psychologist, where she stated in her initial interview:

*"The neighbors are complaining, and I can't sleep with all the racket. What is it with him and those stupid birds!? There are bird droppings everywhere! They never shut up, and I don't get any sleep! I'm a nervous wreck. The neighbors are getting up a petition to evict me, the landlord has subpoenaed me to give cause as to why the house shouldn't be condemned and I'm going out of my mind!"*

The five golden rings did nothing to appease her and quite frankly the eight maids a milking, nine ladies dancing, 10 lords a leaping, 11 pipers piping and 12 drummers drumming just added to the noise and confusion. She was referred to a social worker for support in regards to her home situation but it was too late. Holly was admitted to an asylum on the 13th day of Christmas where she remained until the New Year.

Author: Unknown.

## CareSearch has resources that could have been of help

- Clinical Evidence pages on [Sleeping Problems](#) and [Insomnia](#) may have been helpful for the psychologist
- In the 'For Patients, Carers and Families' section there is information on [Financial Matters](#) that may help Holly if she finds herself evicted
- In the [Allied Health Hub](#) there are pages that provide [Information for Patients, Carers and Families](#) on allied health professionals and how they can help (eg, psychologist, social worker)
- In the [Nurses Hub](#), information can be found on [Family Meetings](#) – which will be helpful to get Holly and Noel together and discuss what things have come to due to a lack of [communication](#).