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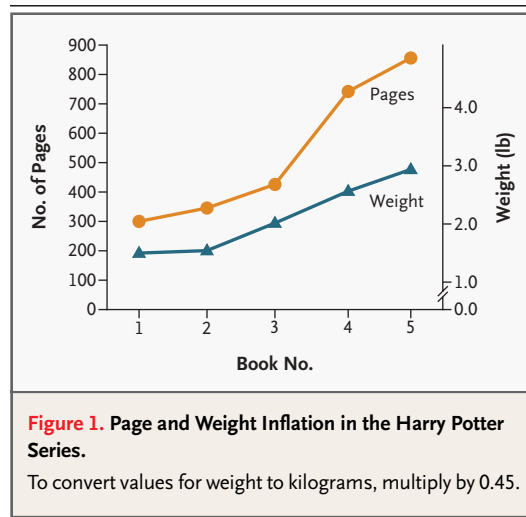
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Hogwarts Headaches — Misery for Muggles

TO THE EDITOR: During the past several months, I have evaluated three children between 8 and 10 years of age who presented with a two-to-three-day history of generalized headaches. In each case, the headache was dull and the pain fluctuated throughout the day. One patient also reported neck and wrist pain. All the patients were afebrile and free of any symptoms suggesting an underlying infectious or neurologic cause. On further questioning, it was determined that each child had spent many hours reading J.K. Rowling's latest book in the Harry Potter series. Two patients read the book lying prone, and the third propped the book on her legs and rested her head on a pillow.

The presumed diagnosis for each child was a tension headache brought on by the effort required to plow through an 870-page book. The obvious cure for this malady — that is, taking a break from reading — was rejected by two of the patients, who preferred acetaminophen instead. In all cases, the pain resolved one to two days after the patient had finished the book.

It is worth noting that I did not witness this phenomenon with any of the previous Harry Potter tomes and that each of Rowling's successive books has been bigger than the last (Fig. 1). If this esca-



tion continues as Rowling concludes the saga, there may be an epidemic of Hogwarts headaches in the years to come.

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