

Medical Matters.

HYPODERMIC INJECTIONS.



Nowadays, when the administration of subcutaneous injections is entrusted so frequently to the Nurse, it is well that one great danger connected with this form of medication can now be obviated. It is well known that in order to obtain drugs in the most concentrated state for use in this manner, alkaloids are chiefly employed, and, consequently, the difference between safety and danger often depends upon the fractional part of a grain. The necessity for absolute care in the dosage has frequently been exemplified at inquests upon persons who have been given, or who have given themselves, larger amounts than were entirely safe. To remedy this, an eminent firm of chemists have prepared discs containing an exact amount of various alkaloids, and which they term "hypoderms." These are used by being placed, in number according to the dose required, in a small quantity of water in the ordinary hypodermic syringe in which they immediately dissolve. The invention is, therefore, a most practical and valuable one, and Messrs. Allen & Hanburys have received for this preparation the credit from the medical profession, which is fairly their due. To doctors, an additional advantage of these discs is found in their extreme portability, so that whereas, formerly, it was necessary for the practitioner to carry about with him as many bottles as it was probable that he would require drugs, thanks to this improved pharmacy, he can now carry in his waistcoat pocket a case containing "hypoderms" of all the useful alkaloids.

COCAINE ANÆSTHESIA.

A new method is advocated for obtaining greater results in this way than have hitherto been gained. A German surgeon advises that an injection of a 2 per cent. solution of cocaine should be given hypodermically as close as possible to the branch of the nerve which supplies the part upon which an operation is to be done. The effect has been found to be that all the branches beyond the part of the nerve, thus locally acted upon, will become numbed and insensible. The greatest intensity of the action is obtained in about five to ten minutes after the injection, and it is maintained for a quarter of an hour or longer, thus permitting any ordinary, simple operation to be performed without the use of Gas or Ether. An injection of this solution, for example, over the ulnar nerve at the back of the elbow has been found to cause insensibility of the ulnar side of the hand as far as the roots of the last two fingers. The method has been pursued by the

surgeon to whom we allude in a large number of cases of minor operations, and with complete success. It is, therefore, well worthy of trial, especially in those cases in which chloroform or other general anæsthetics are inadmissible.

OVARIAN TUMOURS.

In a German medical contemporary there has recently been recorded a case of sarcoma of the ovary in a child of four years old. The researches and tables of Sir Spencer Wells and others have proved that the average age at which ovarian tumours are found is about forty-two; but of course these growths occur in some younger as well as in many who are older than this. They are, however, rare, and especially in the malignant form of the disease, at so early an age as this, and it is much to be regretted that further particulars concerning the clinical history of the case are not given in our contemporary.

THE MOUTH IN ILLNESS.

An extremely interesting article appears in the April number of the *Zeitschrift für Krankenpflege* upon the care of the mouth in sick persons, and which incidentally emphasises the great importance of good Nursing, by attention to the patient in this particular. Every Nurse knows the dryness and redness of the tongue and mucous membrane of the mouth with occasional difficulty in swallowing, or the coated tongue and gums and offensive breath, which occur in patients suffering from exhausting diseases, in unconscious or paralysed persons, in those suffering from fever or typhoid, and in those who have taken, or who are obliged to take, during sickness, strong alcoholic stimulants. The parasites which are always found in the mouth, even in health, and which are the essential cause of decay of the teeth, exert extra influence and obtain increased power when the tissues are weakened by disease. Patients with false teeth should remove these if they are unable to take solid food. The sordes from the lips and gums should be cleansed with soft lint; powdered boric acid or chlorate of potash should be dusted upon herpetic ulcers; the tongue and mouth of unconscious patients should be wiped with a soft rag, soaked in a very dilute solution of carbolic acid. When an unconscious patient keeps the mouth always open, a layer of wet gauze laid over it will keep its interior moist and more healthy. Patients with fever should be supplied with weak lemonade or some other acidulated drink frequently. When the lips become dry and cracked, or in order to prevent this condition, Vaseline should be frequently used.

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