

## Treatment of Acute Pneumonia.\*

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SUPPOSING that in a very grave case cold had been applied after the manner here prescribed, and had failed to modify the difficult breathing, the distress in the chest, the cyanosis, etc., what could be done to reinforce the influence of cold? There is no question that the old and almost forgotten art of venesection will give more assistance than anything else in such an emergency, and should be resorted to without hesitation. Its effect under these conditions are the same as those which are sought to be brought about by cold—viz., relief to the over-distended cardio-pulmonary circulation.

What is to be said of the drug treatment in pneumonia? In the face of the present trend to regard pneumonia as a self-limited disease, that hence all the practitioner has to do is to sit idly by and admire the storm while it is passing over, it is somewhat in a spirit of diffidence that one suggests the feasibility of the use of drugs or of anything else in this disease. In spite of this opinion, however, I have a feeling, which is born of experience, that drugs are invaluable here, and that one of the best of these is *strychnine*. This drug, with its stimulating action on the nervous system in general, and on the respiratory nerve supply in particular, is especially well adapted for use in this disease, as it is in fact in all diseases of the pulmonary organs. Over and above this it is the equal of *digitalis* in enhancing the function of the heart, and in this manner tends to overcome some of the most serious tendencies to death in this disease. To get the best action of *strychnine* it must be given for tangible effects, *i. e.*, in doses large enough to approach the line of its toxic action, and for this reason it is useless when given in small doses. In the adult it is best to begin with a dose of one-thirtieth of a grain four times a day, and reinforce this with a hypodermic dose of one-twentieth of a grain morning and evening. This amount can be increased, and very liberally, too, if the case is one of alcoholic or latent pneumonia. Another valuable drug is *digitalis*. With the very large doses of

this agent which are prescribed by some authorities I have had no experience, but always give it in dessertspoonful doses of the infusion or from ten to fifteen drops of the tincture every four hours, with a view of obtaining its tonic influence on the heart-muscle. *Capsicum* is also of great utility. It is one of our most effective diffusible stimulants, and is of especial advantage in that stage of pneumonia which is characterized by a low muttering delirium, comatose tendency, picking at the bedclothes, etc., and which is very frequently associated with a dry and sometimes black crusty tongue. It is to be given in doses of from ten drops to a teaspoonful of the tincture in water every three or four hours. I have given a teaspoonful of tincture of *capsicum* every hour with the best results in cases of low alcoholic pneumonia. *Morphine* given hypodermically at night in quarter-grain doses will secure sleep and add to the comfort of the patient. Sleep is very important in this disease, and a ten-grain suppository of *assafetida* at bedtime will materially aid the hypnotic effects of *morphine*. *Oxygen* given by inhalation is of immense service in cases of great dyspnoea and cyanosis. Of course it is only of temporary use, but during that time it assists greatly in bridging over the most critical period of the disease, and so saves the patient's life. If the dyspnoea is marked it must be given more or less constantly. The *salicylate of cinchonidia* and the *salicylate of soda* are especially useful in the treatment of pleuro-pneumonia, or in grip-pneumonia, or when the pneumonia is complicated with painful joints, or if the disease occurs in a patient with a rheumatic history. Whenever these manifestations occur it will always be of advantage not to overlook these most important agents.

The question of food also concerns us greatly in the management of this disease. The food should be of the most nourishing character, concentrated in bulk, and of easy digestion. Such food we find in freshly expressed beef juice, of which two ounces, properly seasoned, should be given alternately, every two hours, with a glass of milk containing a tablespoonful of whisky or brandy. If the stomach is rebellious the beef juice and milk and whisky may be given by the rectum.

Now a few words more in regard to the ice-cold treatment of pneumonia. If it were not for the belief which I entertain, that it

\* Read by invitation before the Hartford (Conn.) Medical Society, April 19, 1897, and reprinted from the International Medical Magazine.

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