

## The Special Nursing of the Ear and Nose.

NURSING LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL EAR HOSPITAL.

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### LECTURE V.

#### OPERATIONS ON THE EAR.

In the major operations upon the ear the general preparation of the patient does not differ from that for other surgical procedures, and I presume you are all well acquainted with such preparation from your general surgical training. The local preparation of the ear is, however, of great importance. The canal should be syringed with 1 in 1,000 perchloride solution, in order to clear it of discharge, and then dried. Peroxide of hydrogen should then be instilled for fifteen minutes, and the canal again syringed. The auricle and the parts immediately around it should be scrubbed with soap (etherial soap is best) and water, dried, cleansed with ether and some antiseptic solution, the meatus plugged with gauze, and a pad of gauze should then cover the ear and be secured by a bandage. In cleansing the auricle you should make sure that every fold of the cartilage is well purified.

Sometimes blackheads are found in or about the auricle; these should be squeezed out before the ear is purified, as they may be a source of infection.

In some operations it is necessary to shave the hair immediately round the ear; this I shall allude to again later.

When the operation upon the ear is done under a general anæsthetic other than gas, a sterilised towel should be placed turban-wise round the head, and the ear isolated by one or two other sterilised towels arranged around it.

In the out-patient room time does not always permit of so careful a purification, but syringing with perchloride (1 in 1,000) should at least be done, and the surgeon should be handed some Lister's strong mixture with which to swab out the meatus. Lister's strong mixture consists of an aqueous solution containing 5 per cent. of carbolic acid and one-fifth per cent. of corrosive sublimate.

The minor operations performed in the out-patient room are the removal of polypi or granulations, incision of the tympanic membrane, and the opening of boils in the external canal.

These are best done under nitrous oxide ("gas") anæsthesia, as they are all very painful. Some surgeons may use cocaine (by

means of a solution applied by instillation) or eucaine, but such local anæsthesia is at the best unsatisfactory. All are occasionally done without an anæsthetic, in which case the nurse may be required to steady the patient's head, which must be done as firmly as possible.

*Granulations and polypi* in the middle ear may arise from two causes, chronic suppuration and malignant disease. The latter is decidedly rare. Those which are found in chronic suppuration are due either to neglect or to bone disease; in both cases they will require removal. The instruments needed will be: Speculum, probe, wool-armed probe, aural snare, curette, aural forceps. A towel should be placed over the patient's shoulder and tucked into his collar. Aural snares vary in pattern, the best being Baber's snare, the tube of which is fine enough to enable the surgeon to see well what he is doing. Curettes are of various patterns, that of Burkhardt-Merian being a useful one. When the polypus is large, some surgeons prefer to tear it out with a pair of strong aural forceps.

After the operation has been performed, the ear must be syringed with hot antiseptic solution, and packed with gauze in the manner already described. This simple dressing is most important, and must on no account be left undone.

*Incision of the tympanic membrane.*—The external canal must be purified with great care, as the patient is probably in pain, and the ear is likely to be tender. The instruments required are an operating speculum, wool-armed probes, forceps, and a small sharp knife, such as a Sexton's knife, or a myringotome. The latter is a small, spear-shaped knife. These knives require to be kept very sharp. When the operation has been performed, the meatus must be packed with gauze.

*Opening boils or furuncles in the Ear.*—This is a small operation which causes very great pain; it is, therefore, best done under gas anæsthesia. An operating speculum and a furuncle knife are required, as well as forceps for packing. The purification of the canal must be done very gently, and, owing to the great tenderness, syringing with 1 in 1,000 perchloride solution, the syringe having a length of soft rubber tubing fixed to the nozzle of the syringe, will suffice. The knife used for opening an aural furuncle is either a small, straight, sharp tenotome, or a Grant's special hook-shaped knife. The canal is packed with gauze after the operation.

The more serious operations upon the ear are extraction of foreign bodies by turning forwards the auricle, excision of the ossicles

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