

Consultation, at suitable intervals, which will depend upon the age and health of the child. The Association of Infant Consultation and Schools for Mothers considers that every infant attending the Consultation should come up *at least once* a month whilst under six months of age.

The Medical Officer prescribes the feeding of the child, and supervises the details of health, clothing, &c. Infant Consultations are thus powerful agencies for the promotion of breast-feeding and for the prevention of disorders of nutrition. They are essentially *preventive*, and not directly curative. There is some difference of practice in the different consultations in respect of the simple forms of aperient medicines, and such substances as Virol, which are in some cases sold to the mothers if they are prescribed by the Medical Officer, but no treatment other than these simple (and in themselves almost preventive) measures are carried out at the Consultation, cases of bronchitis, diarrhoea, &c., being referred to the local practitioner or hospital. The child can, however, frequently continue to attend the Consultation for weighing and directions as to feeding, if this be arranged by the Medical Officer. Exact details on these points must usually be determined by the conditions obtaining in each locality.

The Health Visitors should attend at the Consultation, and be present when the instructions are given as to the mothers and infants whom they visit. They subsequently visit the homes and see that the instructions given at the Consultation are being carried out. They can also evidently do good work in advising the mothers as to fresh air, cleanliness, &c., and many other points not directly bearing upon the infant alone. It is quite easy to arrange that the mother shall have a card with the instructions given at the Consultation written upon it, so that the Health Visitor can refer to it at her visit.

The Consultation is held at least once a week, and the infants, on arrival, are undressed and then weighed by the Health Visitor. It is very important that the weighing should be accurately carried out, and for this purpose a reliable balance is necessary. So much is talked about the weighing of babies that it would sometimes appear that it was imagined there was some virtue in the mere weighing of the child. This, of course, is not the case, it is of value only as an indication as to the progress which is being made by the child. Unless this is correctly known it is of little or no value. Notes are kept of the infant's condition, the feeding, as to frequency, quantity, and so on. The condition of the bowels, the skin, whether clean or otherwise, the presence of a rash, the eruption of teeth, &c. It is advisable that the health visitor should learn to enter these notes as far as possible, but they should afterwards be checked by the medical officer, who adds any further points which may be necessary. Some medical officers prefer their own leaflets, but the Association of Infant Consultations and Schools for Mothers now issues case-sheets, with space

for all these matters, and also for the insertion of notes as to the health of the parents, the number of other children, the rooms occupied by the family, &c. By this means it is hoped to get some reliable statistics as to the length of breast-feeding the percentage of breast-fed babies, the incidents of minor troubles, rickets, &c., as the affiliated societies are sending up their returns to the central organisation, where they will be analysed.

A *test-feed*, which should be given only by direction of the medical officer, gives the amount of milk taken by the child at a breast-feed and is of very great value for indication as to continuation of breast-feeding or not. Frequently the mother fancies that she has not enough milk and wants to wean the child, when a test-feed satisfies both her and the medical officer that it is not the case. Test-feeds are of no value at all unless they are carried out with great accuracy, and the balance should weigh correctly to  $\frac{1}{4}$ -oz., or even to a drachm.

The child is then sent through undressed to the medical officer who prescribes the feeding and deals with other matters requiring attention. One of these very frequently occurs in the clothing of the infant, and the ignorance of the mother as to her own food and hygiene is often found to be very marked. And here the Schools for Mothers come to the help of the infant and mother.

Schools for mothers have classes for teaching the mothers how to make the clothes for the babies, and in many cases for the older children as well; how to alter and repair, to cut out; further, how to cook wholesome dishes, &c. Classes may be taken by the medical officer on the general care and hygiene of the infant and young child, which supplement the instruction given at the Consultation.

It is desirable that the mothers should be encouraged to bring up their children who are still under School Age for occasional inspection by the medical officer. There is no reason why children of one year old should be left without supervision until they are of school age.

The Board of Education is, it is believed, prepared to recognise Schools for Mothers as educational centres, and will, it is hoped, give grants for the attendance at the classes. Infant Consultations will probably not be reckoned as centres of instruction owing to the fact that as a rule it has been found to be preferable to have the mothers sent in to the medical officer separately, so that it cannot reckon as a class. It is advisable that Schools for Mothers should not be looked upon as institutions for the distribution of charity, but as centres of instruction and assistance other than financial.

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Mrs. Mary Ferguson, Matron of the Bain Hospital, Leven, has been awarded £15 damages for slander, with expenses on the lower scale, in an action in which she sued Mr. Alex. M. Duncan, of the Cottage Hospital, Leven. The slander complained of was that the defender stated that the pursuer, formerly Matron of the Cottage Hospital, had left it "in a dirty, filthy mess," and attacked her personally as a "lazy, dirty woman."

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