

HYDROTHERAPY IN THE TREATMENT OF THE INSANE.

Dr. Mary O'Malley describes in *The Modern Hospital* the details of methods, and the physics and physiology of various applications of hydrotherapy in the treatment of the insane, which she says can no longer be disregarded as a valuable means of practical therapeutics. The Government Hospital for the Insane, at Washington, D.C., where Dr. O'Malley is Senior Physician, was one of the first in the country to recognize the value of water in the treatment of mental diseases. She states that :

The hydiatic measures employed are the continuous bath, hot and cold packs, hot-air baths, spray and needle bath, Scotch douche, and sitz bath. A salt glow, or rub with moistened salt, is frequently given in connection with the shower or needle.

The cold pack is used at about 60° or 70° F., the method being that on a rubber sheet, placed on a bed table especially made for these treatments, two or more blankets are placed. Two sheets wrung out of cold water are then placed upon the blankets. The patient, with outstretched arms, is placed thereon, her body in the middle, and her feet about six inches from the lower part of the sheet or hem. The arms are well raised, and the trunk is then wrapped in the wet sheets; the sheet is passed between the legs and thighs of the patient to prevent surfaces of the body coming in contact with each other. The arms are then brought down, and the second sheet brought over them, tucking the feet and neck well in, thus enveloping the whole body in a wet cover. The blankets are then drawn firmly around the patient and tucked in

well at the sides, neck, and feet, and the last one is folded and brought underneath the patient. Great care should be taken to have the sheets fit closely at the neck to prevent the ingress of air. A cold wet towel is then applied to the head. A patient should never be placed in a pack with cold feet, as it will delay or prevent a reaction. The feet can be warmed by means of a hot foot-bath for a few minutes before the patient is placed in the pack.

The duration of the pack is usually 45 to 60 minutes. As soon as the patient comes in contact with the cold sheet which serves to envelop her she experiences a mild shock which lasts from five to fifteen minutes. At this time heat from the body accumulates between the

wet sheet and the skin without being able to escape and radiate from the surface. The animal heat, for the moment lowered, now increases, circulation is exhilarated, there is a hyperactivity of the whole cutaneous circulation, glands of the skin respond, and the body is covered with a profuse perspiration and toxins are eliminated. In the calm which follows, the patient as a rule sleeps. After the pack she is placed under the



PROPERLY APPLIED PACK, GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

needle and shower at a temperature of 100° to 110° F. for one minute, then 70° for ten seconds, rubbed, dried, and dressed.

Although packs of several hours' duration are recommended by some physicians, the writer cannot, from her experience, under the conditions prevailing in large institutions, advocate them. For separate cases, where the physician can give his personal attention to the procedure, they may be successfully carried out, but experience shows that there is danger of collapse in some cases, where the responsibility of a prolonged pack is transferred to a

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