

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

### DESCRIBE THE NURSING CARE OF A CASE OF DOUBLE PNEUMONIA.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Maude Cullen, Queen Mary's Hospital, Stratford, E. 15.

#### PRIZE PAPER.

In a case of double pneumonia the nursing is of the highest importance. There is no means known of arresting the disease, which runs a definite course.

The patient must be kept absolutely at rest in bed. The room or ward well ventilated, and kept at an even temperature from 63° to 65° Fahr.; in some cases it may be necessary to raise this. Abundance of fresh air is required; the lungs being unable to work properly, the air admitted must be as pure as possible.

The patient will choose his own position. A pneumonia jacket, or gamgee, must be worn next the skin, and cover the back and chest. A flannel nightgown on top, which should be open down the back and fastened with tapes; this will allow changing, when necessary, with the minimum of disturbance to the patient.

The temperature, pulse, and respiration should be taken every four hours, and if the temperature is very high, as 105° or 106° Fahr., steps must be taken to reduce it; if continued it seriously affects the heart. Tepid or cold sponging may be resorted to in some cases, or the cold, or ice-pack, but it is necessary to closely observe the pulse all the time, if giving the cold treatment, and, if the pulse becomes weak, to immediately discontinue it.

For relieving the pain in the chest cold applications may be ordered, in the form of an ice-bag, cold compresses, &c. This treatment is of more use in the early stages, and for those only whose constitution can stand it.

Hot applications are preferred by many medical men, such as mustard or linseed poultices; these, if applied hot and made properly, should retain the heat for two to three hours. Poultices may often be discontinued after a few days.

Cough is a troublesome symptom, and may be relieved by a "linctus," containing ipecacuanha, squills, or some other expectorant. Linctus heroin (dose ℥i) is sometimes prescribed; as this contains some morphia it is valuable, as it acts as a mild narcotic.

The bowels must be kept freely open. Mist. alba, or salts, are often ordered to be given in the early morning. Calomel is useful, but should not be given unless specially ordered.

In cases of sleeplessness it may be necessary

to give drugs, although simpler measures, such as tepid sponging, keeping the room quiet and dark, and giving a hot drink of milk, may be enough to induce sleep; but if not, the doctor may order a hypodermic injection of morphia to be given, as it is most essential for the patient to have mental or well as physical rest.

The most serious complication of pneumonia is heart failure. Should the heart show signs of weakening, strychnine may be ordered, or alcohol (brandy). The pulse rate will go up perhaps as high as 120 or more, and become irregular. The finger nails will be seen to become blue, also the lips. As much as ℥vi of brandy may be given in the 24 hours, but usually ℥iii is sufficient. Close watch must be kept on the pulse. When it goes up, the doctor usually orders brandy.

Delirium is another troublesome complication. It may be only slight, or, on the other hand, most marked; especially is this the case when the patient is an alcoholic subject.

A nurse should do all in her power to combat this distressing symptom. Often tepid sponging, a warm drink of milk, to which brandy is added, may induce sleep, if the delirium is slight.

One should never deal forcibly with a delirious patient, but as gently as possible; it is the best and really only way to try and coax, instead of using force with him. Usually, if the delirium becomes violent, the doctor orders morphia hypodermically.

The diet should consist of liquids only, in the early stages of the disease. Milk being the chief article of diet, it should be given regularly, at intervals of two to four hours. Egg (beaten up), beef-tea, chicken-broth are all nourishing. The strength of the patient must be maintained throughout the whole illness, because it is due to the proper feeding that his recovery to a certain extent depends.

If there is any sputum, the amount and character must be noted. In double pneumonia the "dyspnoea" may become troublesome. Oxygen gives relief in many cases, but it is not wise to continue its use too long.

A mixture of "ammonia c. ether" is often given in treating this troublesome complaint.

The back and mouth of a patient suffering from pneumonia both require special attention, as the neglect of such denotes bad nursing.

The crisis as a rule takes place from the seventh to tenth day; after that, the chief point to bear in mind is to guard the patient from taking a chill or having a relapse.

Brandy is sometimes ordered at this stage, as there may be a certain amount of prostration, and may be continued for some time after.

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