

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPAL COMPLICATIONS OF PREGNANCY MET WITH IN PATIENTS ATTENDING ANTE-NATAL CENTRES, AND WHAT TREATMENT HAVE YOU SEEN PRESCRIBED?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss M. W. Comer, 8, Wolverton Road, Boscombe.

PRIZE PAPER.

Albuminuria may be discovered on examination of urine, in which albumen will be present. If albumen is found, a catheter specimen should be obtained and a second examination made, as possibly some discharge from the genital passage containing albumen may have contaminated the urine.

The patient has a puffy appearance of face, particularly about the jaws, eyelids, also hands. The legs may be swollen and oedematous. There is a diminished secretion of urine. She may complain of drowsiness.

Treatment.—Usually rest, and light, nourishing diet, with extra milk, water and barley water. No meat, stimulants or condiments.

The bowels should act freely. Calomel should be avoided as a rule.

Warm clothing should be worn, woollen next to the skin.

In severe cases it is necessary for the patient to be kept in bed. All urine should be saved and measured, and a specimen taken from the amount passed during twenty-four hours and tested daily to ascertain the amount of albumen. Esbach's albuminometer is the best apparatus for this test. A diet of milk only will be ordered, and copious drinks of water. Strong purgatives may be prescribed, also hot baths or hot packs to induce sweating. A mixture of chloral hydrate and potassium bromide may be prescribed with a view to lowering the irritability of the nervous system. If the patient does not show a marked improvement in a few days the pregnancy may have to be terminated.

Excessive Vomiting of Pregnancy.—The patient will complain of vomiting at any hour of the day or night on the slightest provocation; also of constipation.

Treatment.—Rest in bed is usually prescribed, visitors prohibited. The doctor may order food to be given in small quantities by mouth or by the rectum. A specimen of urine should be saved for the doctor to examine.

Contracted Pelvis.—On taking the pelvic measurements they will be found to be considerably shorter. Also, on vaginal examination, the promontory of the sacrum will be lower down and nearer the symphysis than is normal,

and the measurement of the internal conjugate shorter.

In cases of slight contraction podalic version may be performed and the presentation changed into a pelvic presentation, the reason being that the head will pass more easily through a flat pelvis when it comes last than first.

In extreme cases Cæsarian section or pubiotomy may be performed. In less extreme cases the doctor may consider it necessary to bring on labour before full term is reached, so that the foetus, being small, may pass through the pelvis.

Hydramnios.—An excessive amount of Liquor Amnii. The patient should wear an abdominal binder for support. When she comes into labour she should be kept lying down to preserve the membranes; the latter may have to be ruptured by the doctor to allow the Liquor Amnii to drain slowly away and prevent further complications. The nurse must prepare for hæmorrhage and an asphyxiated baby.

Venereal disease.—*Treatment.*—Usually mercury, or possibly salvarsan (or one of its associates), may be prescribed.

Gonorrhœa.—The predominant symptom is a yellow vaginal discharge.

Treatment.—Before the confinement, vaginal douches of biniodide of mercury may be ordered. The chief object is to cure the discharge before the child is born, and to lessen the risk of its eyes becoming affected.

Varicose Veins.—Great enlargement of veins, sometimes varicose veins, which are serious and of great discomfort to the patient.

Treatment.—Firm bandaging with such material as soft flannel or crêpe, beginning at the toes and bandaging upwards. An elastic stocking will give some help. Rest with the feet and legs elevated is very necessary. In rare cases an operation may have to be performed, and the veins removed.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss M. Simpson, Miss B. James, Miss Helen Jones.

Miss Jones mentions cramp in the legs as a tiresome complication of pregnancy. The wearing of garters should be avoided, and raising them on a pillow at night often gives relief. Bad teeth may not only cause much pain, but a septic condition of the mouth, and septic absorption.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

Describe the process of bladder washing. What is required for this operation, and what precautions must the nurse observe?

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