

# The Midwife.

## CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

### ADVISORY MEMORANDUM REGARDING THE USE OF DRUGS AND OF GAS AND AIR ANALGESIA BY MIDWIVES.

Revised in April, 1944.

The midwife should remember that Rules E. 10 (a), (b) and 11 of the Rules of the Central Midwives Board are as follows:—

10. (a) A midwife must not, except under a grave emergency, undertake operative procedure or any treatment which is outside her province.

(b) A midwife must not on her own responsibility use any drug unless, in the course of her obstetric training, whether before or after enrolment, she has been thoroughly instructed in its use and is familiar with its dosage and methods of administration or application.

11. Except in the case of a simple aperient a midwife must note in her Register of Cases each occasion on which she administers or applies in any way any drug, stating the name and dose of the drug and the time and cause of its administration or application (Rule 34).

NOTE.—*The question whether in any particular case procedure or treatment was justified will be judged on the facts and circumstances of the case.*

*The Board, for example, would regard the giving of pituitary extract before the birth of the placenta, except under a grave emergency, as treatment outside a midwife's province.*

#### Drugs which may be Carried and Used by Midwives.

(NOTE.—*Provided the midwife has been adequately instructed in their use, there is no bar to her carrying stronger drugs than those specified in the list.*)

The drugs in the list given below may ordinarily be carried by a midwife in addition to aperients:—

- (i.) General Antiseptics.
- (ii.) Drops for instillation into the child's eyes.
- (iii.) General stimulants.
- (iv.) Preparations of ergot.
- (v.) Sedatives for the mother, such as bromide of potassium, chloral hydrate, tincture of opium.

A drug should not be used by a midwife on her own responsibility unless in the course of her obstetric training, whether before or after enrolment, she has been thoroughly instructed in its use and is familiar with its dosage and methods of administration or application. This especially applies to opium and includes knowledge of the legal requirements of the Dangerous Drug Regulations with which she must comply.

NOTE.—*Under the Dangerous Drug Regulations a midwife cannot obtain opium unless she has given notice of intention to practise to her Local Supervising Authority in accordance with the provisions of the Midwives Act, 1902, section 10, and she must enter in a book to be kept for the sole purpose particulars of all supplies obtained, including the date, quantity, and name and address of the person from whom obtained.*

#### Administration of Gas and Air by Midwives.

In the application of Rules E. 10 (a) and (b) the Board regards the administration by a midwife, acting as such, of gas and air by Minitt's or similar apparatus for the purpose of producing analgesia during labour as treatment within her province, provided that:—

1. She has, either before or after enrolment, received at an institution approved by the Board for the purpose, special instruction in the essentials of obstetric analgesia and has satisfied the institution that she is thoroughly proficient in the use of the apparatus;

2. The patient has within one month before her confinement been examined by a registered medical practitioner, who has handed to the midwife a certificate in writing that the patient is in a fit condition for gas and air administration; and

3. One other person, being one or other of the following, is present at the time of administration in addition to the midwife in charge of the case:—

- (a) A State Certified midwife.
- (b) A State Registered nurse.
- (c) A senior medical student.
- (d) A pupil-midwife.
- (e) A retired midwife who has surrendered her certificate in accordance with the Midwives Act, 1936, section 5 (1).
- (f) A woman who is over 21 years of age and who is, and has been for at least a year
  - (i.) A V.A.D. or ordinary member of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John; or
  - (ii.) A duly enrolled member of the Civil Nursing Reserve.

Administration by a midwife of any anæsthetic, otherwise than under the personal direction and supervision of a registered medical practitioner, is regarded as treatment outside her province.

#### NEW INFANT MORTALITY INVESTIGATION.

A new investigation into the causes of infant deaths through infection has been instructed by the Secretary of State for Scotland to the reconstituted Scientific Advisory Committee on Public Health, with Sir John Boyd Orr as chairman.


The Committee was responsible for the survey on infant mortality, which Mr. Johnston described as a "challenging contribution to the study of one of the most important and most intractable problems in the field of Scottish public health."

Reviewing the past record of the committee, the Secretary stressed that their work on the Emergency Bacteriology Service and Blood Transfusion Service had paved the way to smooth and efficient services in both spheres.

The committee is now reconstituted on a wider basis, both geographically and personally, with more specialists on its board. The main function of the committee will be to advise the Secretary of State for Scotland on the scientific application of the results of research to the public health administration and to promote medical investigations designed to assist in the discharge of the responsibilities of the public health services.

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