

Headaches.

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Toxaemic Headaches.

THIS KIND OF HEADACHE is due to some form of poison circulating in the blood stream, the whole of the head aches, and there is mental apathy.

The inhalation of poisonous gases often occur to men who enter disused mines, pits and wells, and then suddenly complain of headache, noises in the ears and drowsiness; giddiness follows and muscular power becomes weaker until sleep passes into coma.

Carbon Monoxide poisoning is very similar; there is nausea and vomiting usually, and the mental weakness persists for a long period, inasmuch, that although the patient realises his danger, he is unable to exert himself out of the danger.

Treatment.—Full use of oxygen and artificial respiration must be given, and treatment for shock.

In cases of Malaria, headache is one of the most troublesome symptoms, also scarlet fever, measles, typhoid fever and most specific infective diseases, including smallpox and influenza.

The symptoms of Uraemia is severe headache followed by cerebral convulsions with coma following, and the pupils are variable; they may be unequal; this is due to poisonous material excreted by the kidneys and retained by the blood, and then acted upon by the central nervous system.

But the most common cause of this kind of headache is due to habitual constipation; the tongue is furred, there is depression and loss of energy and should the lower bowel be very loaded it may cause pressure on the lumbar or sacral nerves causing severe pain down the left thigh.

The stools are hard and dry, small and infrequent; the headache thus caused may be a symptom of some disease primarily of the intestine, or the cause may be due to some nervous disease, such as neurasthenia or to sedentary habits, tumours pressing on the intestine or disease of the intestine, also, and not infrequently to errors of diet.

Products of putrefaction takes place in the bowel, which causes auto-intoxication due to the bacterial growths in the bowel becoming absorbed into the general system.

Treatment.—An attempt should be made to try and evacuate the bowel at least once a day and advice should be sought for the cause of the trouble from the physician.

Congestive Headaches.

This form of headache is one of the most painful, as the throbbing of the vessels of the head persists with such severity, the face being often flushed.

Not infrequently it is associated with gout, which apart from the severe headache, the patient often complains of giddiness, flatulence and mental depression, usually due to an excessive amount of uric acid.

Patients who have suffered from some head injury or have inflammation and septic discharge of the nose and ear often complain of a similar headache, becoming drowsy with a rise in temperature and the veins of the eyes may become engorged.

A similar kind of headache may be complained of in cases of tumours of the brain, with sudden vomiting; the headache may become more of a stabbing character and usually localised; convulsions may follow, but in cases preceding apoplexy the headache is of a throbbing character similar to that following too large a meal, constant studying, worry, excitement and cessation of menstruation in young women due to change in work or climate.

More often patients addicted to the use of alcohol suffer in this way.

Intoxication can easily be mistaken with head injuries; the patient may be found unconscious and the breath smelling of alcohol, having been given stimulants after a fall, and concussion may be present.

The test is, of compression of the supra-orbital nerve as it passes over the incisura-supra-orbitalis, the patient may wince or scowl if unconsciousness is due to stimulants; there is not any reaction in cases of concussion or compression.

Concussion of the brain may be produced by violent blows on the head, or by a fall, such as falling on the feet or in a sitting position which, shaking the brain, causes an interruption in its function, and in some cases bruising some structural lesion of the nervous system.

The patient will suffer according to the severity of the fall or blow. If it is not too severe a state of giddiness, headache, nausea and vomiting may occur only and the face is pale.

Treatment.—Absolute rest in bed in a darkened room in a recumbent position and cold compresses applied to the forehead; hot water bottles and warm blankets should also be provided, and the bowels kept well open for this type of headache.

National Hospital Service Reserve.

Nearly Halfway to Target.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH announces that recruitment to the National Hospital Service Reserve reached 13,810 at the end of February—12,476 auxiliary members and 1,334 trained nurses. This is an increase of 1,629 on January. It was hoped that recruitment during March would bring the Reserve membership well beyond the halfway mark to the initial target of 30,000.

For the second month in succession an English Region led the way with the highest number of recruits. The distinction in February fell to the South West Metropolitan Hospital Region, with 363 (total 1,750); Wales came second with 312 recruits for February (total 2,806).

Higher Maximum Prices for Nurses' Uniforms.

INCREASED MAXIMUM PRICES for all items of nurses' Utility uniforms made from cotton cloths are permitted by a new Board of Trade Order which came into force on March 5th. The increases have been requested by the manufacturers because of increases in cloth prices since last March and have been granted after a careful review.

Examples of the variations in the manufacturers' maximum prices are: Nurses' dress with short sleeves from 23s. 6d. to 26s. 6d.; with long sleeves from 25s. 6d. to 28s. 8d.; aprons from 8s. to 9s. 9d.

The new Order is the Utility Apparel (Nurses' Uniforms) (Manufacture and Supply) (Amendment) Order, 1951, S.I. 1951 No. 297, price 2d.

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