ABSTRACTS OF THE CURRENT LITERATURE

THE NEWBORN


The five aspects mentioned in the title were studied in a series of premature infants. The socio-economic classes were grouped as follows: professional and managerial, intermediate, skilled workers, unskilled workers and farmers. The mortality was higher in the highest socio-economic group than in that of the other classes and the mortality was lowest among the infants of farmers.

There was only a slight influence of the type of work of the mother on the mortality, neither did her age and parity affect it. However, it is possible that illegitimacy increased the mortality rate.

It was concluded that the changes in the distribution of infants according to the factors studied were not great enough to explain the changes in the mortality rate.

INTERNAL MEDICINE


The manifestations of this inherited disease reflect abnormalities in the cutaneous, skeletal, ocular, and internal systems. The classic features include hyperelasticity and increased fragility of the skin, hypermobility and luxation of the joints, subcutaneous pseudotumors, and often blue scleras. The soft velvety skin is particularly susceptible to trauma and resulting wounds are slow to heal, frequently with spreading of the scar. Calcification at the sites of ecchymoses is not uncommon. Molluscous pseudotumors are seen often at pressure points, and small subcutaneous tumors, resembling neurofibromas, are seen frequently in the lower extremities. Hyperextensibility can be seen in all joints but is particularly common in the metacarpophalangeal joints. Ocular manifestations include myopia, keratoconus, microcornea, retinitis proliferans and blue scleras. The internal manifestations include diaphragmatic hernia, ectasia of the respiratory and alimentary systems, rupture of the lung, aortic aneurysm, tetralogy of Fallot, bladder diverticulum, megaesophagus, and colitis.

The clinical and histologic features suggest that the basic defect is an abnormality in the collagen bundles rather than an abnormality in the elastic tissue. These patients characteristically have difficulty with wound healing of all types, so that
even minor surgical procedures should be discouraged whenever possible.


An autopsy series of 623 children who died in the Children's Hospital of the University of Helsinki in 1959-61 was examined bacteriologically and histologically for pneumonia. The majority of the series (57 per cent) was newborn (under 21 days). The hospital treated a total of 19,063 children during the period concerned, and pneumonia was diagnosed by clinical examination in 7.8 per cent of them.

Pneumonia was verified in 385 (61.8 per cent) of the dead. Staphylococcus aureus was isolated from the lungs of 131 children, of whom 112 were found to have pneumonia (86 per cent); for Klebsiella the figures were 83 and 71 (86 per cent), and for Pseudomonas 75 and 62 (83 per cent), respectively. Only these bacterial findings showed a distinct correlation with pneumonia. They were found in a total of 255 cases, 217 (85 per cent) of them with verified pneumonia. These three micro-organisms were isolated from the lungs of 56 per cent of all the pneumatic cases and from those of 16 per cent with no pneumonia.

It is believed that these micro-organisms, especially in newborn children, may often be the etiological factor of pneumonia.

The series suggests that it is probable that children admitted to hospital at the age of under 24 hours are often infected by these bacteria on arrival, more frequently by Staphylococcus aureus (40 per cent hospital strains according to the phage type) and less frequently by Klebsiella.

No appreciable spread of Staphylococcus aureus in the hospital could be demonstrated from this material.

A spread of Pseudomonas and Klebsiella in certain wards was demonstrable.


Six young pregnant women with acute pyelonephritis were given tetracycline hydrochloride intravenously in greater than the usual dosage. They developed hepatic disease characterized by nausea, vomiting, pyrexia, jaundice, acidosis, azotemia, hematemesis, melena and terminal hypotension and died.

Toxic reactions to antibiotics of the tetracycline group are mainly gastrointestinal.

The urine cultures were positive in four of the six patients. All were negro females. Jaundice appeared on the third to fifth day after starting therapy, and the patients died five to 13 days after therapy was begun.

Autopsy findings were similar in all cases—a fine droplet fatty metamorphosis of the liver involving all portions of the lobules. There was no necrosis or inflammatory reaction.

The hypotension which occurred in these patients was unresponsive to pressor agents and death ensued.

THERAPEUTICS

Methyl-hydrazine in treatment of Hodgkin's disease: and various forms of haematosarcoma and leukaemia: G. Mathe, O. Schweisguth, M. Schneider,