

BOOK REVIEW

PROPHYLAXIS IN GYNAECOLOGY AND OBSTETRICS

BY

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This is a review of the volume comprising of papers read at the International Congress of Gynaecology and Obstetrics held at Geneva in July 1954. The main themes of this Congress are prophylaxis in relation to maternal, foetal and neonatal morbidity and mortality and to genital tumour growth. It also includes teaching and organization of prophylactic medicine in our speciality. Over 200 authors contributed to this volume consisting of more than 1,300 pages in five different languages. All summaries at the end of each paper are translated into English, French or both languages which conveys the meaning of the original paper although some of the summaries are too brief to give a true idea of the article. The introduction to the volume is an article on the Rise of Preventive Medicine in the world by the famous Prof. H. E. Sigerist of Yale University. The first part of the volume is devoted to Gynaecology beginning with two special articles, one on General Biological aspects of Tumour Growth by Prof. Houssay of Buenos Aires and the second on the Cytochemical approach to problems of Tumour Growth by Caspersson of Stockholm. This is followed by papers on detection, prevention and treatment of uterine cancer by well known authors like Ayre, Hinselmann, White, Hansen, Schroder etc. The next subject discussed is benign tumours of the ovary where the importance of conservatism in sur-

gery is stressed by Serment of France, Schmid of Deutchland and Vazifdar of India. This is followed by cancer of the ovary, vulva and breast. In the opinion of Antonopoulos of Athens cytological examination of peritoneal effusion after centrifuging large quantities atleast two litres, is of value in diagnosing carcinoma of the ovary. Calandare of Buenos Aires stresses the importance of leucoplakia particularly fissured erosive or verrucous type as precursors of carcinoma in 30 to 60% of cases and advocates vulvectomy as the only line of treatment. Leborgme of Uruguay in a well illustrated article emphasises that accurate diagnosis can be obtained by means of improved radiographic technique and biopsy is not required for diagnosis of cancer of breast. Next in order are a few articles on uterine myoma and endometriosis. Prof. Beclere of Paris stresses the influence of oestrogen in development of myomas as well as the cause of bleeding. He recommends hystero-graphy and annual examination in elderly women for early detection and advises testosterone propionate to check the growth and control bleeding. Everet of U.S.A. in a critical review of experimental endometriosis proves Sampson's theory of implantation of menstrually shed endometrium as a definite etiological factor although it does not necessarily mean that this is the only way in which endometriosis can arise. Under the heading

of Hormones Enzymes and Genital tumours, Prof. Loeser of London writes that thyroid hormone acts as an anticarcinogen as proved by experiments on mice. If dibenzanthracene, a carcinogen, is injected into mice it produces tumours but if it is injected together with thyroxine the carcinogen disappears from the tissues and hence the tumour formation is controlled. Clinically in 100 cases who had partial thyroidectomy performed the incidence of cancer is greater as there is higher lipid and much lower histamine content of the blood which is regarded as a defence mechanism against cancer formation. Thyroid in large doses in inoperable cases retards cancer growth and it is of value as a prophylactic against recurrence after surgery or radium or X-ray in doses of 1 to 5 grs. daily. Prof. Meigs of Boston in his article on "Can results be improved, in treatment of carcinoma cervix?" mentions that in 1953 Grahams' demonstrated the phenomena of sensitization response "SR" which consists of changes in the basal cells of the vagina. Meigs advocates this test before deciding on the treatment. If SR is good response to radiation is better than surgery. In addition changes in normal cells after radiation known as Radiation Response of "RR" are described and it is a method of proving that the selected patient is going to respond well to radiation or not. So with advances in surgery, radiology and these phenomena of SR and RR, treatment of cancer should no longer be a prerogative of radiologists or surgeons.

The latter part of this volume is devoted to Obstetrics pertaining to protection of the child during pregnancy and delivery. Prof. Adair of U.S.A. has lucidly pointed out the importance of interrelations of foetal and maternal welfare.

This is followed by a few articles on genetic factors affecting growth, maternal nutrition and reproductive failure. There are a number of articles on abortion, habitual abortion and premature delivery from its various aspects such as incidence, etiology, diagnosis and treatment. Under toxæmia of pregnancy there are numerous articles including one on etiology by Sophian of London. He believes that increased resistance to stretch of myometrium is the etiological factor in causation of toxæmia. This increased tension leads to ischaemia with production of adenosine which is found in excess in blood toxæmic patients. This resistance to stretch of the muscle evokes reflex renal ischaemia and afferent arteriolar spasm. Renal ischaemia explains the retention of salt and water, the basic changes in pre-eclampsia. Based on this hypothesis the treatment is directed towards interference with the utero renal reflex. The last part of the volume is devoted mainly to intranatal and natal conditions in the foetus and includes articles on blood incompatibility, infection of foetus, foetal anoxaemia, oxytocics and foetal distress, and obstetric trauma. Drs. Westen and Enhorning of Sweden have shown by experiments on foetuses ranging in length from 13-34 cms. that injection of oxygenated heparin blood in umbilical vein in cases of asphyxia improves heart rate, blood pressure and primitive respiration and deeply asphyxiated new born infant could be revived by transfusion when other methods had failed. In agonal states transfusion through umbilical artery was recommended. Prof. Yagi of Japan in his article on Prophylaxis of Birth Injuries says that in 699 autopsies of new born he found intracranial haemorrhage in

29.8% and pulmonary lesions in 27.9% which combined is one half of the total. He divides asphyxia into three groups, pulmonary 27.9 cerebral 29.8 and cardiac 1.4. He studied foetal heart during labour and noted no change in the first stage. In the second stage when the head is engaged the variations become marked and the heart sounds remained slow during the contractions, independent of rupture of membranes. In breech heart rate was not slowed down till the engagement of the aftercoming head proving that it is due to compression of the head and not due to any gaseous changes in the utero placental circulation. The factors contributing to asphyxia are stress to the skull, congestion and resistance of the skull. Prophylaxis of birth injuries depends upon prevention of prematurity, breech presentations, prolonged second stage and relaxation of the birth canal by saddle block or pudendal block. Final-

ly the last chapter is an article on the teaching of obstetrics and gynaecology as Preventive medicine by Prof. Eastman of John Hopkins Hospital, where he stresses the importance of well organised maternity care as a master key to successful preventive medicine. Teaching of mothers and nurse midwife is absolutely essential under the guidance of public health authorities and the profession. Cancer detection and propaganda is vital to prevent deaths which take larger toll of women than even child birth.

This volume makes very interesting and enlightening reading comprising of extensive research work and views of various authors on varied subjects. This book is priced at Sw. Frs. 80 and is available from the Library of University, Georg & Cie, 5 Corraterie, Geneva, Switzerland, to any person who is interested in this speciality.