

ABORTION.

A. H. Curtis, Chicago (*Journal A. M. A.*, Dec. 9, 1916), reports the case of a woman who had given birth to a child who had died within twelve hours and who in the former pregnancy had symptoms of genito-urinary disease, and who had a stillborn child. The patient recovered her general health after delivery but suffered from mild vesical symptoms. Examination of the urine showed, in culture, hundreds of colonies of hemolytic streptococci. The microscope revealed a strongly gram-positive coccus of rounded form and good size, always in pairs and often forming small clumps. In broth and in condensation fluid, chains of considerable length occurred. Litmus inulin was not acidified. Injection with a small dose of autogenous vaccine (10,000,000) was followed by a recurrence of lumbar pain and fullness. Intravenous injections of the culture were made in a rabbit in the earliest stage of pregnancy which was killed and examined six days later and revealed the characteristic signs of early pregnancy and convincing evidence of absorption of fetuses. Another rabbit two and one-half weeks pregnant was intravenously injected with a similar dose and the fetuses dwindled in seven days to half their former size. A patient of Dr. DeLee's gave birth to a stillborn child but Moody found a streptococcus which he obtained in pure culture from the placenta and from the heart's blood. A subculture of this organism was used for the study and except that growth did not readily occur on dry plates and hemolysis was not obtained on blood-agar slants, it was the counterpart of the streptococcus described above. A pregnant rabbit near term injected with this organism gave birth to nine young on the following day, four dead and the remaining five succumbing within a few hours. A month later, when two weeks pregnant, again injected and killed after five days, it showed half a dozen retrogressing fetuses. Organisms other than the streptococcus have the power to interrupt the course of pregnancy but do not materially affect these results. These are the facts: Streptococci have been isolated from women giving birth to stillborn children and have been obtained in pure culture from the placenta and from the stillborn fetus, and these cultures can cause fetal death in rabbits. The streptococcus encountered in these cases seems peculiarly adapted to infection of the genito-urinary tracts. Several closely and probably identical strains have been isolated from patients with uterine, tubal and kidney infections. This type is especially modified by and has special affinity for growth in the genito-urinary tracts and is characterized by persistence of infection, low virulence and richness of growth.
