

CURRENT MEDICAL LITERATURE

MEDICINE

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IDIOPATHIC PLEURISY AND PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS.

The frequency with which pulmonary tuberculosis follows an attack of idiopathic pleurisy has been so variably estimated by different authorities that, while some companies accept a candidate for insurance as a first-class life after an attack of idiopathic pleurisy, others reject this class of candidate altogether. A laborious investigation, carried out in Sweden by H. Allard and H. Köster (*Hygeia*, October, 1911), brings out several points of interest which are of special value, as the observations represent many years of work on a large amount of material. Allard's series deals with 200 cases of idiopathic pleurisy treated in Gothenburg from 1881 to 1893, their subsequent fate being investigated in 1910. Köster's series deals with 371 cases of idiopathic pleurisy and 62 cases of specific pleurisy treated from 1894 to 1908 and reported on in 1910. An analysis was also made of the frequency of idiopathic pleurisy in the histories of 2,123 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis. The two series were compiled on the same principles independently of each other. In the first series, representing 180 cases of serous and 20 cases of dry pleurisy, it was found that sixteen to twenty-eight years later 87 patients were alive and well, 28 were tuberculous, 61 had died of tuberculosis, and 24 had died of other diseases. In the second series, representing 334 cases of serous and 37 cases of dry pleurisy, it was found that two to sixteen years later 164 patients were alive and well, 118 were tuberculous, 62 had died of tuberculosis, and 27 had died of other diseases. In 650 cases there was a history of idiopathic pleurisy among the 2,123 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis which were investigated. Taking the two series together, the writers find that idiopathic serous pleurisy is followed sooner or later by pulmonary tuberculosis in 47.7 per cent., and that even in the case of idiopathic dry pleurisy this percentage is as high as 42. The prognosis after idiopathic pleurisy is, however, much brighter in early than in middle life, and, while the subsequent incidence of tuberculosis is only 30 per cent. when the pleurisy has occurred between the ages of six and ten years, it is as high as 60.4 per cent. when the pleurisy has occurred between the ages of 31 and 35 years. Even at the high age of 66 to 70 years idiopathic pleurisy