

## SMALLPOX AND CHICKEN-POX

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THE spread of smallpox depends in part on wrong diagnoses; in part on concealment of cases; in part on the failure to report known or suspected cases; but chiefly on the neglect of vaccination. Mild cases often are confused with chicken-pox and, in general, many may not be seen by a physician unless a severe case calls for a general "round up," while many are never seen by physicians at all. Hence many alleged chicken-pox cases are smallpox and some alleged smallpox is really chicken-pox. The occasional failure to distinguish between mild smallpox and chicken-pox is due less to lack of information concerning smallpox than to unfamiliarity with, or disregard of, chicken-pox. The physician who has the chance to see either smallpox or chicken-pox should not fail to study minutely the lesions of the cases he encounters in correlation with the age of the lesions, especially during the acute stages.

Smallpox of the now prevailing type is regarded as a very trivial disease, because its physical injuriousness is far less than that of whooping-cough or measles; but from the standpoint of the future, its importance is enormous. Its existence means a large contempt for the disease, coupled with much disregard of vaccination.

The following figures\* summarize the experience of Prague during twenty-one years with a severe type of smallpox; they need no comment:—Unvaccinated persons, 90,130; cases in unvaccinated persons, 7,642; deaths in unvaccinated, 2,224. Vaccinated persons, 3,005,578; cases in vaccinated persons, 8,178; deaths in vaccinated, 423.

Each 10,000 vaccinated persons yielded 27 cases and 1.4 deaths.

Each 10,000 unvaccinated persons yielded 830 cases and 247 deaths.

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\* Welch and Schamberg, "Acute Contagious Diseases."