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Original Articles

SUBTENTORIAL TUMORS AND ABSCESES *

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The technical difficulties encountered by the surgeon in any attempt to expose, much less remove, tumors of the cerebellum, mainly on account of its anatomical relations, are especially great. Encompassed as it is by large venous sinuses, the peculiar plane of the tentorium cerebelli, and its confined position, far removed from the surface of the body and with a limited and difficult approach, one realizes at once that there are especial dangers met with in a radical subtentorial operation. There are distinct risks also attending manipulations upon the cerebellum in order to gain adequate exposure of tumors, due to traction, causing trauma on the medulla oblongata, which at times proves rapidly fatal. Owing to the relatively small space occupied by the cerebellum as compared with the hemispheres of the cerebrum, when the surface tension is relieved, the cerebellar tissues almost invariably protrude through the opening made in the skull and this takes place even under normal conditions. This state of affairs is all the more aggravated when a tumor is present. The situation is all the more embarrassing when the new growth is situated in the cerebello-pontine angle, for the cerebellum cannot be retracted to the same degree nor with the same ease as can the cerebral lobes.

Profuse and alarming hemorrhage may also be met with, due to emissary veins which pierce the skull near the mastoid process or in the neighborhood of the occipital protuberance,

* Read at the Surgical Section, Academy of Medicine, Dec. 16th, 1913.