

Bromide of Potassium in the Treatment of Young Children.

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Translated from the Bulletin Générale de Thérapeutique of Nov. 15, 1869.

The sedative properties of bromide of potassium are now generally recognized, and its therapeutic application, becoming daily more widely extended, makes it to-day, without doubt, one of the most useful articles of the *materia medica*. The freedom from danger attending its administration, even in moderately large doses, makes it particularly applicable to the treatment of young children, whose susceptibility to the action of opium and its preparations renders the employment of these agents very dangerous to life.

During the first few months after birth, infants are frequently subject to attacks of extreme sleeplessness and restlessness—some sleeping in the day, and never at night; others hardly at all either in the night or day—exhausting, by their continued wakefulness, all those who are so unfortunate as to be compelled to watch them. Children in this condition are benefited most promptly and effectually by bromide of potassium. * * *

The cough which accompanies dentition is certainly not produced by an inflammatory condition of the mucous membrane of the bronchiæ, but is a spasmodic nervous phenomenon analogous to the vomiting which is seen in similar cases. It seemed to me rational, therefore, to administer a remedy which has a manifest action on the nervous system. It is certain that the cough, in this case, which in similar cases has defied the most popular remedies, yielded completely in three days, and each time that it returned the efficacy of the remedy was the same. Wherever there is diarrhoea, however, my experience satisfies me that it is imprudent to administer the bromide, as this disease is likely to be increased by it. But how does bromide of potassium act in the affections accompanying dentition? Does it act by virtue of its sedative property, upon the general nervous system, or has it a special anæsthetic action upon the buccal cavity? It is known that the bromide of potassium paralyzes the sensibility of the *velum palati*, so that, while taking it, the uvula may be titillated with impunity. But its action is extended to every portion of the mucous membrane of the mouth, and thus, during dentition, it relieves by its anæsthetic action upon the inflamed gums as well as by its general sedative action upon the nervous system.

From cases that have come under my observation,

I believe myself authorized to state that, in the diseases incidental to dentition (when uncomplicated by diarrhoea or decided inflammatory symptoms), the bromide of potassium will be found very useful and will often succeed in preventing the convulsions so frequent at this epoch of life. * * *

CONCLUSIONS.

1. Bromide of potassium, administered in moderate doses, is tolerated perfectly well, by children of tender age.
2. By its sedative action, it relieves the insomnia of young children, whether this insomnia be calm or accompanied with agitation and cries.
3. Administered to infants suffering from affections during the period of dentition—characterized by agitation, insomnia, cough, etc.—it succeeds frequently in relieving these complications, and by its judicious use may sometimes prevent convulsions.
4. Bromide of potassium should not be given to children suffering from diarrhoea.
5. In certain exceptional cases in which nervous erethism is predominant, bromide of potassium will have a most prompt and decisive action.—*N. Y. Med. Jour.*, May 70.

Internal Administration of Carbolic Acid.

Dr. Habershon observes that in some conditions of weakness, especially when the bronchial tubes are dilated and the mucus is retained in the bronchi, putrefactive decomposition ensues, and the breath becomes extremely offensive. Again, in chronic bronchitis, the muco-purulent secretion not unfrequently becomes so offensive that the patient is greatly distressed. In these instances, as also in some stages of phthisis and in diphtheria, carbolic acid may be of great service when employed as an inhalation. It is, however, he states, in some diseases of the alimentary canal that he has found most benefit from the internal use of carbolic acid. In many functional as well as organic diseases of the stomach, fermentative action takes place; distension, pain, eructation, and vomiting, consequent on retention of the digested food in the stomach, are the conditions under which the advantages of the internal use of carbolic acid are most clearly displayed, partly, no doubt, from its power in checking cryptogamic development. It is not advisable to administer it where there is much irritability of the stomach, nor where there is redness of the tongue. It is, however, very serviceable in cases of atonic dyspepsia, of chronic ulcer of the stomach, when active ulceration has ceased, and in obstruction of the pylorus, whether arising from fibroid or cancerous disease. It should be administered with extract of henbane, with compound ipecacuanha powder, or it may, with the aid of a