

THE INDICATIONS FOR OPERATION IN FIBROIDS OF THE UTERUS.

Noble, *American Medicine*, September, 1904, is convinced that the teaching, concerning the complications and degenerations of fibroids, is faulty. He refers to his paper read in 1901 before the British Gynecological Society, and the series of cases reported by Cullingworth, Frederick, Scharlieb, and Hunner and McDonald. There are thus available 983 cases of fibroid tumors from which an analysis can be made, as to the nature of the degeneration and complications of these growths. The analysis is very long, and only the chief points in it can be here referred to. In 78 cases there was cystic degeneration of the ovaries; in 69, hyaline degeneration; in 67, necrosis of the tumor; in 47, ovarian cysts; in 46, salpingitis; in 58, hydro-salpinx; in 33, pyosalpinx; in 44, myxomatous degeneration; in 40, cystic degeneration; in 34, intra-ligamentous development of fibroids; in 29, cancer of the body of the uterus; in 22 sarcoma; in 12, cancer of the cervix of the uterus.

Cancer of the body is here relatively more frequent than of the neck. This is the opposite of what occurs in women without fibroid tumors, in whom cancer of the neck is four times as frequent as that of the body. The fibroid tumor must exert such an influence upon the nutrition of the uterus as to predispose it to the development of cancer of the body.

A consideration of this analysis should dispel the idea that fibroid tumors are benign growths, and that their chief danger consists in the fact that they sometimes cause hæmorrhage. The analysis shows that 16 per cent. would have died because of the degenerations in the tumors; that 18 per cent. would have died from the complications present; and a certain percentage would, undoubtedly, have died from intercurrent diseases, brought about by the chronic anæmia and by injurious pressure from the tumors upon the pelvic and abdominal organs. The statement that fibroid tumors disappear after the menopause is quite erroneous. Many grow more rapidly after than before the climacteric and they are at least as liable to degenerations and complications. Women with fibroids are sick women, suffering either from the fibroids or from various complications. The risk they run of losing their lives by not having the fibroids operated upon is greater than that of submitting themselves to operation, as at least a third of these 983 women would have died had they not been operated upon. A fibroid tumor should be removed just as an ovarian one, irrespective of the symptoms produced, because we know the life history of these growths, and that if left alone they will, in at least a third of the cases, produce a fatal result.