

Late experiments prove that this salt is a product of oxidation going on in the tissues, but normally, carried to the liver, is changed by the hepatic cells into urea which is excreted through the kidneys.

Urea is an allied substance but is non-toxic.

The symptoms prevailing in dogs with their livers closed from the circulation seem to be an exact counterpart of what takes place in puerperal eclampsia. It has been found by injecting into the circulation a 5 per cent. solution of carambic acid, epileptic convulsions have been produced just the same. May it not be then that the acid, or its salts with ammonia, is the offending substance so long sought for?

It has been shown that in pregnancy there is an increased amount of cell activity. This cell activity produces a correspondingly greater amount of ptomaines. Pathology points to a deranged liver; fatty degeneration of cells and necrotic patches with infarcts and dilatation of the vessels. The liver, unable therefore, to perform its normal function by neutralizing or transforming these toxic agents into harmless innocuous substances, they naturally are circulated to the brain, act on the nerve centres, disturbing the psychic balance, and consequently convulsions, coma and death are the results from "auto-intoxication."

Therefore, from what I can gather from a careful study of the subject, it seems to me that puerperal eclampsia is due to an auto-intoxication by waste ptomaines, which, circulating to the brain, act on the centres in cortex causing a nervous irritability or an unstable puerperal eclampsia balance, which may either explode spontaneously or induced to an explosion of nerve energy by peripheral irritation from the uterus.

Another element which probably favors puerperal eclampsia is, as pointed out by Dr. Snyder, of Queen's University, Kingston, the tendency there seems to be for coagula to form in the blood of parturients, due to fibrin, causing thrombi to lodge in the brain.

Eclampsia occurs usually about once in every ten hundred cases. It is more common in primiparæ and more especially when there are twins. No age or position in life is free from it, and it seems most common in well nourished and full blooded primiparæ. Next, I think, are stout women with pendulous bellies, and especially when labor is slow and painful.

It has been stated that in Belgium, Sweden, and the states bordering on these, cases of eclampsia are very numerous, and it has been suggested as a cause that the excessive amount of lime salts absorbed in the drinking water may favor the accumulation of toxic agents in the blood.