

Studying the findings of others is profitable in many ways, but there is no better road to real knowledge than for each one to make some investigation for himself.

With this object in view I have made a series of records of cases of alveolar abscess, in order to establish for myself at least a generally applicable method of treatment.

A set of fixed rules is impossible because of the infinite variety of conditions, but it may be expedient to possess a method of treatment that will be applicable to a large number of cases.

There is not a jot of originality in the method which I follow, for I have borrowed it here and there as suited my purpose.

My object is not to write a treatise, but to state, as briefly as possible, a simple method of treatment available to the average practitioner, who cannot afford to spend too many valuable hours at one case at the usual scale of fees obtaining for the same.

The mundane consideration of fees comes in here with noticeable force. The ordinary practitioner cannot be a philanthropist. He must do enough work to earn his living, and cannot make a minute study of each and every detail. Especially is this true of abscesses, for the ordinary sufferer wants the tooth out, and cannot rightly appreciate the value of the time and skill necessary to treat it.

Did you ever notice the discrepancy between the medical and the dental fees for practically the same service? For the treatment of an abscess, other than alveolar, a physician would charge anywhere from five to fifty dollars. For the exercise of just as much ability and knowledge the dentist may obtain from one to five dollars, five being a rare and rosy limit only attained by the favored few.

There is a common sense reason for each and every condition of affairs, and I venture to attribute the general avoidance of abscess treatment on the part of the dentist to the above mentioned economic reason, and economic reasons are regarded as the most practical and powerful of our time.

Now, to get at a method that will, in a measure, give good results to both patient and dentist.

Of the two varieties of abscess, acute cases yield more easily to treatment, while chronic cases are a weariness to the flesh.

History usually reveals a neglected tooth or a tooth in which the pulp has died beneath a filling, or where an attempt has been made to destroy the pulp and fill the roots. The result is the same. I propose to deal only with the mature abscess. The first act is to thoroughly open and cleanse the pulp chamber and canals. If this cannot be done, the most economical step is extraction. Remember, I am not addressing this advice to the Dr. Black's and those others whose life work lies in investigation, but to the