

# Clinical Note.

## HERPES GESTATIONIS.

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This is a somewhat rare disorder, "characterized by multiformity of lesion and excessive itching,"\* which may occur at any time during the last six months of pregnancy, or may appear a few days after parturition has taken place. No reference occurs to it in many of the text-books on obstetrics.

Clinically, it bears a marked resemblance to dermatitis herpetiformis,† the eruption having a tendency to appear first on the limbs. There is usually little interference with the general health, although sometimes febrile symptoms are observed. The most troublesome symptom is the burning and itching from which the patient suffers, and the affection is usually difficult to cure before parturition but often disappears shortly after that event.

The following case occurred in the dispensary of the Woman's Medical College, Toronto, September 20th, 1902: Mrs. S., aged 38 years. The eruption first appeared in July, 1902, and was copious, multiform in character, but consisting chiefly of small vesicles, hot, irritable and itchy, placed upon an erythematous base. The lower limbs were almost covered with the eruption, and small ulcers had formed in many places. There were also areas where the healing process had occurred.

The patient's second child, a boy 2½ years old, was suffering at the same time from an attack of impetigo contagiosa, probably parasitic in origin, although a careful examination failed to confirm this opinion. It was at first thought that the two cases might have a common origin, but the difference in the character of the lesions (which in the child lacked the multiformity, the vesicular type, the erythematous base and the sensations of burning and itching), and also the difference in the clinical course, seemed to justify the diagnosis of herpes gestationis in the case of the mother.

The treatment given was for the child frequent bathing with boracic lotion and the application of weak sulphur ointment twice a day, and for the mother a lotion of linseed oil, carbolic acid and lime water, applied frequently. On October 12th the child was quite cured, and the mother somewhat improved.

On November 1st labor occurred, following a normal course, and almost immediately after labor the skin lesions disappeared. When I last saw the patient, on November 23rd, only some redness of the skin remained to mark the places where the lesions had been most numerous. The patient gave no history of similar attacks during the two previous pregnancies.

\* Diseases of the skin. Malcolm Morris.

† Duhring and others consider Herpes Gestationis and Dermatitis Herpetiformis identical.