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## Original Articles

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### THE CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AUTONOMIC NERVES SUPPLYING THE VISCERA, AND THEIR RELATIONS TO THE GLANDS OF INTERNAL SECRETION

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When we consider how carefully the cerebrospinal nerves have been studied, and how important each small twig is for the clinical pathology of disturbances of sensation on the one hand or of motility on the other, and then turn to the paucity of studies bearing upon the nerves which supply the viscera, we cannot help being impressed with the contrast. The lack of knowledge in the latter domain is all the more striking when we recall that it is precisely with the viscera that we, as workers in internal medicine, are predominantly occupied; except for scattered and non-systematic observations, the field of visceral neurology has, clinically, until recently, remained practically unexplored. The nerves going to the internal organs have, however, during the past two decades, strongly attracted the activities of anatomists, physiologists and pharmacologists, and their researches have thrown a brilliant light into regions hitherto obscure. They have revealed a series of mechanisms which, though of considerable complexity, are proving to be of the greatest importance, not only for the functions of the viscera themselves, but also for those of the body as a whole. It turns out that the nerves supplying the viscera stand in a position intermediate between the cerebrospinal nervous system and the internal organs; both the central nervous functions and the visceral functions are to a large extent dependent upon the mode of functioning of the visceral nerves. The state of tonus in the visceral nerves is

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