

We have evidence that the spermatic cord conveys numerous filaments from the sympathetic system of nerves. These are lodged in the loose, myxomatous tissues, which constitute the interstitial frame-work of the cord.

Everyone who has had much experience in hernial operations has noted the common tendency of the fine thread-like element of the cord to pass down in the most diverse directions, by the peritoneum, and become so intimately blended with its areolar investment as to be often isolated with difficulty.

If we critically examine the anatomical elements of the cord, it will be observed that they are often, in places very intimately fused together, the sperm-duct, the blood vessels, nerves and lymphatics. As we approach the inguinal canal, where the internal veins have nearly all converged, they become larger, and less characteristic, and the tubular structures of the cord are more independent and readily separated.

Cirsocele or varix of the internal spermatic veins presents pathological changes and clinical features quite unique and characteristic.

In advanced or aggravated cases, there is marked atrophy of the cremaster muscles, with a descent and dragging of the testis. Owing to recurring phlebitis and periphlebitis, the spermatic tributaries undergo great thickening, become tortuous, spiral and sclerosed; the overlying nerves and lymphatics undergo severe tension and compression; the nutrition of the testicle is interfered with and under many circumstances an impeded spermatic circulation is the initial step to several consecutive and ulterior changes in this organ.

As internal spermatic veins are in no manner connected with the scrotal vessels, the dartos or other overlying parts are not involved. There are no atrophic dangers as seen in saphenous, vulvar, or hemorrhoidal varix. On the contrary, there is a true hypertrophy of all the cutaneous elements, especially in the elastic felting of the corium, which now elongates and thickens to support the enlarged pendulous testis, deficient in muscular support.

It will be generally observed, that varicocele is unilateral and is an infirmity which becomes manifested at an early date and after sexual activity commences, and hence the reason why it must be regarded as a disease of early life.