

A REPORT ON THE SYSTEMATIC USE OF ANTI-TOXIN AS A PROPHYLACTIC MEASURE IN DIPHTHERIA AT THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN, 1902-03.*

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During my term as intern at the Hospital for Sick Children, I had the opportunity of observing the effects of the prophylactic use of diphtheria antitoxin, and it is with great pleasure that this report is presented, for it is one, I think, from which convincing proof of the great value of the systematic use of this antitoxin may be obtained; but, before going further, I would thank Dr. Arthur Wright for the great assistance he has given in keeping up the records of his wards, and for his close observance of all cases under his care.

The hospital, I may say, has never been free, for any length of time, from diphtheria since its establishment on College Street. It would break out in isolated cases in spite of the great care taken in the selection of cases—by using a daily report from the City Medical Health Officer in which are given the names of those developing diphtheria in the city limits, the number of the house in which they lived, and the school attended; also by having all visitors sign a book, stating that they have not been in any residence in which there was infectious disease, for at least twenty-four hours, and absolutely prohibiting their entrance if there was infectious disease at their home, as shown by the report of the Medical Health Officer. Yet in spite of these precautions, cases continued to develop.

The suggestion that antitoxin should be given every twenty-one days to every patient in the hospital was made by Dr. Goldie. Through the kindness of the Superintendent, Miss Brent, who has shown untiring energy in the suppression of infectious diseases in the hospital, correspondence was held with various hospitals for children in the United States, as to the use of diphtheria antitoxin for immunity purposes. Some stated that they had given it up, others again could not say enough in its praise—of the latter I might particularize the Boston Children's Hospital, remarking in their reply that they had never been able to rid themselves of diphtheria until after the systematic use of the antitoxin.

The systematic use of the serum was commenced at the Hospital for Sick Children on July 10th, 1902, 500 units being

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