

OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY.

IN CHARGE OF ADAM H. WRIGHT, JAMES F. W. ROSS, ALBERT A. MACDONALD,
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Puerperal Infection.

In the April number of the *American Journal of Obstetrics* will be found a long and interesting article on this subject. The object of the study was "to determine the practical value of douching and the indications for diagnosis and treatment that may be drawn from bacterial examinations of the uterine and vaginal secretions and exudates during pregnancy and the puerperium." The work was done in the Department of Pathology, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, New York City.

A new "tube" was used for collecting the material for examination. The author states that "care is necessary in the withdrawal of the tube to avoid any flowing of the secretion into the lumen of the tube," but does not say how this is avoided. The success of the technique seems to us to depend on just this point, and we regret that the directions are not more explicit. Some changes were also made in the culture media.

Many of Dr. Wadsworth's experiences agree exactly with our own, e.g.: "The number of species found by culture seldom represents the total present, morphologically, in the smears." When found "they were very exceptionally identified." "Organisms were much less frequently present in the lochia, which were collected from the vagina six to twenty-four hours after labor" (than in those collected before labor). "When characters (of organisms) are determined, the standard descriptions for accurate comparison are inadequate." These are some of the numerous difficulties which confront the investigator.

In reference to streptococci, three cases are cited, in which repeated examinations, both before and after labor, demonstrated the presence of streptococci in the vagina. In two of these cases the organisms proved fatal to rabbits, but the puerperium was normal in all these cases.

In reference to douching, douches were used in these three cases, and in others also, and were found quite ineffectual in removing the organisms.

So much for cases in which the puerperium is normal.

In cases in which infection has taken place the author concludes that "a sufficiently accurate diagnosis may be quickly and readily made" (between infection by saprophytes and infection by septic organisms). We have found on several occasions that the bacterial findings have enabled us to predict