

Marjolin, Boyer, Mandl, and others, describe a cavity in the interior of the organ of a somewhat triangular form, into the inferior part of which projects an oblong eminence, resembling a cock's comb. The existence of this cavity is denied by others. Kolliker believes it to result, when found, from the separation of the medullary from the cortical portion after death. Gulliver says, "the gland has seldom a cavity, although a large and distinct venous sinus sometimes exists." Cruvelhier considers it doubtful whether the supra-renal capsules have a cavity in their interior, as their name would seem to indicate; and Meckel, after careful research, adopts the opinion of those who deny the presence of a cavity. "*Je pense,*" he further adds, "*que cette cavité n'existe pas, du moins dans l'état régulier, qu'elle ne se forme qu'après la mort, et qu'elle est le résultat soit de la décomposition spontanée de la substance interne, qui a très peu de consistance, soit de la destruction de cette même substance par les manipulations auxquelles on soumet l'organe en l'examinant.*"

Many of the older anatomists supposed that these bodies possessed an excretory duct, by means of which they communicated with other organs. This opinion is completely exploded by modern observers. Bartholin, Peyer, Valsalva and Ranby, believed them to communicate with the testicles; Kulmus with the thoracic duct; and Huermann and Bendt with the pelvis of the kidney. Gulliver thinks it probable that the veins are the excretory ducts of the gland.

They are largely supplied with nerves derived from the solar and renal plexuses of the sympathetic. According to Bergmann they receive filaments from the phrenic and pneumogastric nerves. They are also richly supplied with blood vessels from the aorta, the phrenic and the renal arteries.

The functions of the supra-renal bodies are still undetermined. All researches into their anatomy have been barren of results, so far as their physiological action is concerned. It yet remains to be seen, however, what light pathology will throw upon this obscure subject. The recent discovery by Dr. Addison, of a connection between certain abnormal conditions of the system and a diseased state of the supra-renal capsules may lead to the establishment of their true value in the economy. For, as that gentleman has truly observed, "if pathology be to disease what physiology is to health, it appears reasonable to conclude, that in any given structure or organ, the laws of the former will be as fixed and significant as those of the latter; and that the peculiar characters of any structure or organ may be as certainly recognized in the phenomena of disease as in the phenomena of health."