

DANGER SIGNALS IN ANESTHESIA.*

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The subject I have chosen for this paper was taken on account of the general lack of knowledge on the part of the practitioner in the recognition of signs of danger in the administration of anesthetics, or even, when recognized as something unfamiliar in the routine signs of anesthesia, the inability to interpret them.

It is not to be expected that the busy practitioner can have the time or opportunity to make himself familiar with all or even many of them; nevertheless, since he is called to give not a few anesthetics during the year's routine of duties, a few hints on the more commonly met with signs of danger may not come amiss.

Next to the proper method of administration, the recognition of any variation from the usual signs of surgical anesthesia is of the utmost importance, for if one can train himself to recognize the initial approach of danger the real dangers may often be avoided, and no doubt some lives saved. Signs of danger are so varied and so subtle that unless one is giving more time and attention to their recognition than is possible for a general practitioner to do the dangers are realities to be coped with rather than avoided.

It is difficult to point out, simply by means of reading a paper, all the different indications that present themselves to an experienced anesthetist during an administration. He has come to his knowledge through the slow, varied and time-honored process of personal experience, and besides, there do arise some unaccountable conditions of which, from experience, he has learned what the result will be if the warning they convey is not heeded.

It would be a simple matter for the expert to impart his knowledge were he able to demonstrate clinically, in one or two patients, the signs as they appear to him when giving an anesthetic, but in order to do this it would mean possibly as many different patients and methods of administration as there are dangers to be met.

Dangers do come unexpectedly even when the most careful administration is given and the closest watch kept; nevertheless, many could be avoided if one studies the signals heralding their approach and is prepared to act promptly and efficiently in averting them.

I will endeavor as briefly as possible to indicate a few of the

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