

Jaundice

Doctor John B. Deaver,


Jaundice is but a symptom and may occur in conjunction with obstruction of the larger bile passages by gall-stones, cicatrices, neoplasms; obstruction of bile passages within the liver; or from localized inflammation. It may occur low fever, malaria or other infectious conditions that have no apparent connection with the liver. Toxic poisons such as arsin, phosphorus and others often produce yellow pigmentation of the skin. Icterus neonatorum is a type traceable to physiological condition. The psychic element appears in what is known as emotional jaundice.

The commonest type is due to absorption of bile through calculous obstruction of the common bile duct; less frequently, as in catarrhal and infectious jaundice bile absorption occurs in the liver without duct obstruction; while in the hemolytic type discoloration of the skin is due to disintegration of the red corpuscles, through diminished resistance of which the gall bladder loses its color and its walls thicken so that bile is not excreted by pressure action of the liver and is forced into the lymphatic system and blood stream.

Special tests to determine presence of bile retention demonstrate probable affection of the liver cells in milder types of catarrhal jaundice, the lesions being slight and recovering easily. Special attention has been devoted to study of bile elements in the plasma in dissociated jaundice. This term refers to the dissociation of the bile salts and pigments in the plasma. By using collodion sacs with spectroscopic analysis it has been demonstrated that bile salts found in the liver may be sent separately into the blood though bile pigment may not. The existence of dissociated jaundice of hepatic origin has been determined. The term "complete jaundice" has been proposed for cases showing presence in the blood of bile pigments and salts, "hepatic dissociation jaundice" when bilirubin or bile salts are found separately in the blood, while "hemolytic jaundice" indicates presence of bilirubin, when found exhepatally, in the blood without bile salts.

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