

GONORRHOEAL ARTHRITIS.*

BY

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It is not my intention to take up the subject of gonorrhœal arthritis in a systematic manner, but simply to give an account of some of the more important features of a series of forty-eight cases that have been under observation in the Royal Victoria Hospital during the past four years. I am indebted to Dr. Cushing for the following very careful analysis of these cases.

During the past four years, forty-eight cases of gonorrhœal arthritis have been treated in the wards of the Royal Victoria Hospital. This number only includes those cases in which the diagnosis was certain and the patient remained in the hospital for a course of treatment.

The following statistics have been prepared from the case reports and special charts of these cases. These have been kept with more than ordinary care and accuracy for the purpose of observing the results of treatment by the Tallerman-Sheffield hot air apparatus.

Of the forty-eight cases only six were women. All the cases were young adults, the average age being about 30 years. The only exception was an old man of 69 years.

An attempt was made to ascertain whether a previous rheumatic history predisposed to involvement of the joints in the events of a subsequent gonorrhœa, but no such relation could be made out. Only two asserted that they had suffered from inflammatory rheumatism in early life and one from chorea. Only three had a decidedly rheumatic history. It was, however, clearly shown that one attack of gonorrhœal rheumatism predisposed to another in case of a fresh infection of the urethra, as no less than 15 cases *i.e.*, nearly one-third of all, have a history of previous attacks of gonorrhœal arthritis.

Only four cases gave a history of exposure, overwork, or intemperance, to account for the extension of the trouble from the urethra.

As to the gonorrhœa, it is impossible to draw any general conclusions; to judge from these cases arthritis is as liable to follow a mild attack as a severe one. Twenty-six claimed that it was their first attack of gonorrhœa. Some of the others had had repeated attacks of gonorrhœa before arthritis occurred. As to the stage of gonorrhœa, there is the same difference. Eighteen cases occurred in the acute stage be-

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