

EXCESSIVE LENGTH OF THE SIGMOID FLEXURE AND ITS SURGICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

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It is universally acknowledged that there is much variation in the length of the sigmoid flexure, within what may be described as normal anatomical conditions.

The normal length of the Sigmoid Flexure in the adult, is stated by E. H. Taylor, (Applied Anatomy), to be "about 17 inches," the "average length" in Morris' Anatomy, $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and the "length of the sigmoid" in Deever's Surgical Anatomy, 17-18 inches, in Gerrish's Anatomy, "14 inches or more," while Byron Robinson classes as "unusual length" or giant sigmoid, anything in excess of 25 inches.

Anatomists, pathologists, and surgeons each from their own points of view, are constantly interested in what may be called the normal variations in the length of the sigmoid, but in this communication, I shall consider only those of unusual length, say, in excess of 25 inches in the adult. In the Medical Standard of Chicago appeared, during the past year, (March to November, 1907), a series of articles on the sigmoid flexure, by Byron Robinson, B.S., M.D., in which the anatomy and physiology of the sigmoid are most fully and exhaustively dealt with.

From these articles I take the liberty of quoting the following statements:—"The sigmoid is a faecal reservoir. The sigmoid begins at the distal end of the left colon, and ends at the proximal end of the rectum. It is a single, inseparable, indivisible, colonic loop extending from the colon to the rectum."

"In 490 males there were 6 subjects with a sigmoid of 26, six with 28, seven with 30, three with 32, and one with 36 inches in length."

"In 165 females there were 3 subjects with sigmoid of 26, four with 30, one with 32, and one with 33 inches in length."

"The sigmoid is relatively long in youth and short in adult life. In 485 males, (in a series of 700 autopsies), the maximum length was 36 inches, the average was 19 inches, and the minimum was 6 inches. In 165 females the maximum length was 33 inches, the average was 17 inches, and the minimum was 5 inches."

"The sigmoid has the widest range of motion of all the abdominal viscera. It varies greatly in position, length, diameter, distension, and evacuation."

"It lies in the right iliac region in 19% of cases (Huguier's position)."

"Giant vertical sigmoid occurs in 7% of males and 6% of females."

"Curshmann describes 15 monster sigmoids in 233 bodies, which means 6%."