

RADIUM TREATMENT OF RODENT ULCER, SKIN CANCER, SARCOMA, KELOID, NAEVI, ETC.*

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The most distinguished worker in connection with the therapeutic uses of radium is conceded to be Dr. Louis Wickham, of Paris, who for years has been devoting himself to this branch of study. He stands in the fore-front of all observers, and it is to his friendly consideration that I was enabled for successive years to make observations in the Laboratory for Radium at Paris. Sir Malcolm Morris writes, "Nothing can deprive Dr. Louis Wickham of the glory of having laid the foundation stone of scientific radium therapy."

I wish to dwell more particularly upon the use of radium in the treatment of skin cancer, as the opportunities I have had in observing its use in these cases have been numerous. I have seen radium used and have used it with satisfactory results in keloids, papilloma, naevi, tuberculosis of the skin, chronic eczema, sycosis, psoriasis acne rosacea, pruritis ani, as well as in the rodent ulcer, skin cancer and sarcoma.

Some of the writers still continue to regard the rodent ulcer as distinct from epithelioma, though pathologically no distinction can be discovered between them. The canceroid ulcer is a superficial form of epithelioma with clean cut edges which are somewhat indurated and everted and the skin may be undermined. The crateriform ulcer of Hutchison, Paget's disease, in other words, papillary epithelioma, can all be properly grouped together under the heading of carcinoma of the skin, so far as the question of treatment by radium is concerned.

Carcinoma of the skin may be classified pathologically as squamous celled, cuboidal celled, and as cancer rising from prickle cells or from the basil cells usually of greater or less malignancy, and extending into tissues where they did not normally occur giving rise to metastasis, local or general, rarely spontaneously retrogressing, but leading if not completely eradicated to general cachexia and death.⁽¹⁾

The rays from radium have a selective action on certain diseased tissue elements, affecting them much more powerfully than they do healthy tissue, and eventually causing their destruction. The types of cells on which they have the most marked

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