
Special Selections.

GASTROPTOSIS.

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We are born with our stomachs standing vertically, but during the first period of extrauterine life this organ assumes the normal, that is, an almost horizontal position. Cases in which the stomach has remained in its fetal, that is, in the vertical position, have not been observed. In infants of a certain age the normal (nearly horizontal position) is invariably found. With advancing age of the children, however, displacements occur. It is said that such displacements happen more frequently in girls than in boys. Meinert found among 50 girls of 12 years of age almost every second one with a dislocated stomach, while among the patients of his gynecological clinic there were more than 90 per cent. with anomalous position of this organ. He judges that among male adults such deviation is found only in five per cent. Certain it is that gastropotosis is of more frequent occurrence in women than in men.

As to the frequency of ptosis of the different abdominal organs, gastropotosis is, according to Langenhaus, the most numerous; in his report on 100 cases of enteroptosis that malplacement was wanting in only five; nephroptosis was present in 47; in the five cases mentioned nephroptosis existed without any other abdominal organ being displaced, in the others it was associated with gastropotosis. In three cases the spleen, and in 18 the liver, were included in the ptosis, liver and spleen only in Landau cases.

Gastropotosis is a lowered position of the pylorus and of the lesser curvature. The definition of the lower border of the stomach alone is not diagnostic, since this may be the characteristic symptom of a large stomach as well. Here we have to distinguish between ectasia and ptosis, without knowing the situation of the lesser curvature, neither a general increase of volume nor an abnormally lower position of the stomach, nor a combination of both can be diagnosticated. Gastropotosis can only be diagnosticated by means of inflation of the stomach or the gastrophane.

Kussmaul was the first who called attention to the descent and the vertical position as well as to the loop form of the stomach.