

ARTERIOSCLEROSIS. DISEASES OF THE MEDIA.

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INTRODUCTION.

Our knowledge concerning the etiology of arteriosclerosis has been much enhanced by the experimental work done on this subject, and, with the information thus acquired, our views respecting this disease have changed to a considerable extent. It is now realized that the disease, instead of being generalized and affecting the entire arterial tree, (1) may be localized, affecting the arteries of one particular organ, (2) may involve one particular type of artery only, and (3) may be limited to one or other zone of the arterial coat. Not infrequently at the post-mortem table we are impressed by the extensive sclerosis of the arteries of the brain, and the coincident absence of anything approaching to marked involvement of the rest of the arterial system. Nor is it possible for any one to make more detailed investigations of the arteries of case after case, such as those which have formed the basis of this article, without becoming convinced at an early stage that the extent of the disease manifested in the aorta bears no relationship to that found in the peripheral vessels.

With all the advances that have been made, there still remains not a little uncertainty as to how best to classify, that is, to coördinate and bring into relationship the many conditions affecting the arterial wall, differentiated during the last generation, and included under the general headings of sclerosis and atheroma. Regarding the intimal changes, it may be said that the more recent studies of Jores and others have established a satisfactory basis for such classification. The same cannot be said regarding the changes in the media. There is still much confusion, both as to the nature and mode of development of these changes, and as to the relationship between medial and intimal disturbances. It has seemed to me timely to make a careful study of the conditions affecting the media,