

CONCLUSIONS

1. Outspoken changes in liver function can be demonstrated in most cases of advanced liver cirrhosis, in markedly congested livers associated with myocardial insufficiency, in carcinoma of the liver, in luetic livers and in conditions of cachexia with marked anemia.

2. Functional changes have been most marked in cirrhosis, neoplasm of the liver and in cachectic conditions associated with severe grades of anemia. Functional changes in chronic passive congestion have not been frequent or pronounced.

3. Harmony in the findings of the tests is present in some cases, that is, most of the tests indicating either a decrease function or a normal function. However, lack of harmony is striking in other cases.

4. Concerning the relative merits of these tests the impressions that have been received are that the determination of the phenoltetrachlorophthalein excretion, the fibrinogen, and the nitrogen partition in the blood and urine are of decided value in revealing the presence of, and to a less degree the extent of, functional involvement, while the demonstration of a fibrinolytic ferment is of decided diagnostic importance. The determination of the sugar tolerance and of the lipolytic activity of the blood apparently afford information of much less value.

The information derived from these studies on the liver does not compare in diagnostic and prognostic value with that derived from corresponding studies of the kidney. This may depend on several factors, namely, (a) the inadequacy of our knowledge of liver physiology; (b) the limited number of cases and of types of severe liver injury under observation; (c) the possible existence of a great "factor of safety" in the liver, whereby in case of necessity function is carried on efficiently by a relatively small proportion of liver substance; (d) the fact that the prognosis in many of these cases is controlled by factors other than decreased liver function, and (e) the lack at present of correlation of anatomic, clinical and functional findings occasioned by the newness of the subject. The results, however, encourage us in the belief that scientifically and also clinically this subject is worthy of extensive investigation.