

## Antistreptococcic Serum in Puerperal Septicaemia.

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JOHN D. WILLIAMS, M.D., in *British Medical Journal*, October 31st, gives a few notes of clinical value on the use of antitoxic serum in the treatment of puerperal septicaemia as met with in private practice, with records of six cases as treated by the serum, observed by himself and his colleagues; also a series of eight cases collected from literature. We notice that all of the fourteen cases were severe; that there were two deaths. The labor was instrumental in six cases; lingering in one. In all the placenta came away easily and completely.

Perineum, torn and not sutured in four cases; torn and sutured in two cases; uninjured in one case. Lochia, scanty in six cases; suppressed in two cases.

The use of constitutional agents, combined with local and instrumental treatment, was tried in all cases before the serum injections were resorted to, for a period varying from two to fifteen days.

Following each injection of the serum, the previously hot, dry and inactive skin passed into a state of moisture and active perspiration, the parched lips and dry tongue became moistened, suppressed lochia, and lactation reappeared, delirium, insomnia and restlessness passed off into a refreshing sleep, from which the patient awoke feeling better in body and clearer in mind. In three cases, however, no benefit appeared from the injections. He states that though puerperal fever may be independent of streptococci, in the majority of cases it means infection of the genital canal, and ultimately of the whole system with the streptococcus pyogenes. It is in this class of cases only that the serum is of value.

The strepto infection is at first essentially a local disease; it is later that it becomes a blood infection. Therefore, local treatment, antiseptic douches, and curettage cannot be dispensed with, but must be carried out in conjunction with the serum, which comes into play when the germs have passed into the circulation by annulling their action and toxin, and obviating the organic degenerations which are beyond our control.

We only hope that the great value claimed for this plan of treatment may bear the test of time, but must remark that reliance cannot be placed upon opinions based on such a small number of cases. We observe that the injections did not ward off all its effects, for we note mention of bilious vomiting and diarrhoea, patchy pneumonia and an erythematous rash as some of the symptoms due to or at least