

Statistically, the death-rate under spinal analgesia is given by various authorities as follows:

MORTALITY OF SPINAL ANALGESIA

Holm	708	8
Petherick	7807	20
Reich	2000	6
Zakladsky	4679	12
Wagner	16300	14
Stewart	22717	16
Total	54211	100

This gives an average mortality of 1 in 500. Too much importance must not be attached to such figures, as many of the Continental surgeons state that they have used the method in thousands of cases without a death.

The danger of mental shock incident to local and spinal analgesia cannot be overlooked. Profound physical and mental depression, and even coma, have followed these methods, although the patients felt no pain. The prognosis made upon statistics, which as has been indicated above, is not wholly reliable, is less favourable when these methods are adopted than when a general anæsthetic is given. In recent times surgeons have adopted, for certain operations such as those on the liver and that for removal of the rectum, a combination of spinal analgesia and general anæsthesia. The prognosis, although less favourable from the standpoint of the anæsthetic, may, as regards the patient's ultimate relief, be more so, as the method is alleged to render the manipulations easier and more complete relief may thus be obtained.

A study of the elaborate tables and papers of fatalities issued by the British Medical Association in 1900² shows that comparatively few of the deaths, recorded with sufficient precision to admit of exact classification, are due wholly and solely to the anæsthetic. The factors adopted by the workers on this committee were—the anæsthetic, the operation, and the state of the patient at the time of the operation. Although the number of cases examined was comparatively small, 25,920, yet it is sufficiently large to form a fair basis for comparison. However, the last two factors, the operation and the state of the patient, which may at first sight appear to be constants, are in fact not so. This is shown by the consideration that, for patients whose