

Selected Articles.

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THE THERAPEUTIC STATUS OF TETANUS ANTITOXIN.

Whenever a new therapeutic effort is made which is based on apparently rational views, it is our duty to encourage it in every way possible, although we should at the same time regard it with judicial doubt until its success is proved. In none of the recent advances is this more the case than in respect to tetanus antitoxin. In the first place, the comparative rarity of the disease in man provides us with clinical studies few and far between; and, in the second place, the statistics as to recovery are imperfect, in that, roughly speaking, in the form of an Irish bull, all cases of tetanus under the old methods of treatment either died or got well. That is to say, the severely infected cases died, do what we could, and the mild or chronic cases, in which death did not ensue in a few days, persistently recovered, in the face of treatment which must in times past have seriously hampered their chances. It is a notorious fact that chronic tetanus is very apt to recover, and until this class of cases is separated from the severe forms in the statistics of antitoxin treatment, we can learn little that is permanent or positive.

Mawson has collected (*Lancet*, August 10, 1895) thirty-eight cases, published and unpublished, upon this subject, and points out the facts we have endeavored to express.

	Recov- eries.	Deaths.
Total number of cases collected, 38, including cases that are only mentioned as having been treated, no further particulars being given....	25	13
Number of cases treated, of which particulars are given, 22.....	17	5
Number of cases treated, of which particulars are given, and which were regarded by their recorders as "severe," 9.....	5	4
Ditto, "not severe," 13.....	12	1

He thinks that the average mortality of tetanus in chronic cases may be regarded as fifty per cent., and in acute or severe cases as ninety per cent., and he has arranged in the four following groups all the recorded cases of treatment of tetanus by immunized serum. Of the thirty-eight cases collected, only twenty-two