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 Double pagination of p.13 wrong in original: should read p.12 and p,.13 THE TREATMENT OF ASTHMA

BY

CAUTERISATION OF THE NASAL SEPTUM

A THESIS FOR THE

M.D. DEGREE / 1916.

SUBMITTED BY A.S. BOYD .



INTRODUCTION.

The additions to our knowledge of diseases and their treatment within the last few years have been most impressive. And yet, to the mind of the General Practitioner, it is at times galling to find that, in the course of his daily labours he may be brought to bay with a well known condition, which defies all efforts for amelioration. He turns to his books and consults the highest and most recent authorities to find in many instances conflicting theories, and advice which may prove to be ineffective.

Bo better example of such dilemma is to be found than in the treatment of the condition known as spasmodic Asthma.

Our knowledge of this disease has made but little advance even in recent years, and especially so in regard to the etiology and the treatment thereof.

It is however universally agreed to be a neurotic affection. It is not a specific entity. But like the conditions of headache, vomiting etc., it may be produced by a variety of cause. One factor however appears to be present in a large number of cases viz., an abnormally sensitive condition of the nasal nucuous membrane.

The recognition of this has led to an important advance in the treatment, that is, the cauterisation of the nasal mucuous membrane.

In the ordinary course of private practice I used to have most discouraging results in my treatment of this disease until this method was brought to my notice, I have since 1905 practised this treatment in such cases as came under my care.

My results have been so satisfactory that, in the present Thesis I propose to deal more particularly with this form of treatment. No apology is necessary for dealing with a subject of such importance, and it is hoped that any contribution to the literature on this subject will be helpfull.

ETIOLOGY OF ASTHMA .

In the year 1670 Willis wrote that asthma was a spasmodic condition due to spasm of the air tubes; and from that time to the present day the views of most writers appear to vary between spasm of the bronchial muscles and a turgescence of the mucosa as the checause ief of the disease.

As an example of the writings of recent authors, Fleming in "A" short Practice of Medicine" states - "that asthma is due to a spasm of bronchial tubes, is beyond question, but there is much

and he adds, - A vase motor paresis is a favourable theory, but there is nothing to prove its existence.

The advance in knowledge of this subject gained in 245 years would therefore appear to be a recognition of the fact that bronchial spasm, hyperaemia and turgescence of the mucosa etc., are mere characteristics of the disease. The true cause remaining abscure.

All recent writers however appear to agree that in a majority of cases of bronchial asthma a strong neurotic element exists, and that heredity is an important factor is undoubted.

brought about by the non-recognition of the distinction between the existing causes of the asthmatic condition which are numerous, and vary in almost every asthmatic subject; and that true cause of the disease which must remain constant producing as it does, a similar train of effects in all cases. This remarkable variation in the exciting causes of asthma is well known. The emanations from animals such as cats or horses may throw one asthmatic subject into a most violent paroxysm and may have no unfavourable action on another who may be prone to the conditions only in certain localities etc. etc.

It has long been known that asthma is sometimes associated with intra nasal disease and special attention has been directed to the causal connection between nasal disease and asthma since Voltolini's classical case of asthma which he cured by the removal of nasal polipi (Voltolini Krankheit en der Base Breslau 1888).

lesions may act as the sensory exciting cause of a reflex which manifests itself as an asthmatic paroxysm. But in my experience I have seen so many typical asthmatic conditions in patients who had an intra nasal abnormality, that I am forced to the conclusion that intra nasal disease must merely occupy the position of one of the exciting causes in the asthmatic condition.

Nearly all authorities however, recognise that some connection does exist between asthma and the nose; and it is not difficult to understand that if such connection exists, the diseased intra nasal condition will be more prone to peripheral irritation than that which is normal, and so it may be found that a very large proportion of asthmatics may suffer from some nasal abnormality.

The eximiting causes of asthma are therefore peripheral and act on the central nervous system predisposed as it may be by heredity to the

instability which gives rise to asthmatic conditions.

The true cause of asthma being therefore central and common to all cases however peripherally produced, the complaint is due, in all probability
to some disturbance of some morbid condition of the
Respiratory centre or Vaso motor centre, or both these
centres, the one being interdependent with the other.

I have corroborated the observations by Francis that a remarkable fall in the blood pressure takes place as a result of nasal cauterisation; and many writers, notably Weber have thought that the Vaso motor nervous influence plays a very prominent part in the symptoms of asthma.

Dr. Pierre Bonnier in La Revue writes on the Direct Action on the Nerve Centres. He gives some remarkable results of nasal cauterisation in various affections, and suggests that the nasal mucous membrane is to be looked upon as a telephonic exchange board, and we have to learn where to insert the pin in order to get connection with the various nerve centres.

That a profound effect is produced on the asthmatic condition in many instances by intra nasal cauterisation is beyond dispute; and Dr. Bonnier's explanation would seem to indicate that an effect is produced on the Respiratory or Vaso motor centre, re-establishing by peripheral stimulation the equilibrium

which has been temporarily lost. This morbid condition of the centres is responsible for the condition of asthma whatever its exciting causes may have been, and therefore all asthma is fundamentally the same and is to be treated in the same way.

TREATMENT BY CAUTERISATION OF NASAL SEPTUM .

In 1905 my attention was first directed to this method of treatment. At that time it was difficult in this country to obtain surgical appliances locally; and my early cases were operated upon in the most primitive manner. I improved a cautery, the handle of which was an empty mauser cartridge to which I fitted a steel shank, shouldered and finsihed at the end with a small round bulb. The steel was heated to a white heat in the stowe and rapidly used, before it had time to cool, as a nasal cautery. The performance of the operation under these circumstances was laborious and tedious, but the results were quite satisfactory. And in one respect the experience gained has been profitable, because from subsequent observation of other cases treated with the usual galvano cautery, I find that good results are more readily obtained when the cautery is applied at a dull red heat, then when a bright white heat is used.

THE METHOD OF CAUTERISATION .

The operation is extremely simple and painless. The nasal septum being cocainized. A thin light line is drawn with the point of a galvano-cautery across the nasal septum from a point opposite to the middle turbinated body, forwards and downwards for a distance of from quarter to half an inch, as above stated.

The best results are obtained when the cautery is heated to a dull red heat rather than when heated to a bright white heat. And a light delicate touch appears to be far more effectual than that obtained by a severe and deep burn.

The right side is first cauterised in this manner and after an interval of a week or ten days the left side is similarly heated. Both sides are thus treated alternately at intervals of one week, or longer, if necessary to permit of healing of the previous scar, until distinct improvement in the asthmatic condition is brought about.

Improvement may occur immediately after the first application of the cautery. In such a case I usually allow an interval of ten days to elapse. I then cauterise the opposite side and after another ten days interval, the first side is again cauterised. If

complete relief is now obtained, I desist from further cauterisation and in several cases no further treatment has been required.

Certain cases appear to obtain complete relief after one cauterisation e.g. Case No.11 was operated on once and five years later reported never to have had an asthmatic attack since date of operation Case No.15 obtained complete relief from first attendance but unfortunately has been lost sight of.

In other cases favourable results are not so rapidly brought about, and in such the discretion of the operator must be employed as to the interval allowed between each cauterisation.

or five cauterisations have failed to obtain the desired result, great patience and perseverance may be required. And I believe that in such cases the best results are obtained by cauterising at intervals of one month. Such cases, so treated for a term of one or even two years, even in my experience, show very marked improvement, and I believe in most cases, he completely cured.

Of the total number of 60 cases recorded the results summarised are as follows:-

Complete Relief

16.

No improvement 4
Unreported results 10.

Those cases reported as completely relieved have been carefully observed, and in several of them the good result has been maintained for 10 years.

proved are practically cured. But where the smallest degree of asthma has persisted they have been entered under this classification. In this country even more than in European Countries one experiences an extraordinary difficulty in persuading patients to persevere in a systematic course of treatment, and this even in instances where they acknowledge to have received benefit.

And I feel persuaded that but for this unfortunate circumstance, a considerable number of the 30 cases recorded as improved, might have been completely relieved and possibly my 4 cases of failure might have been improved.

of a general practice and especially one in South Africa where I believe the disease is somewhat less prevalent than in Europe - the occurance of cases is necessarily limited and no very great weight of numbers can be produced which might lead to more valuable conclusions. The results, however appear to me to be extremely satisfactory and there are one or two other points of some interest to be noted.

The relation of intra masal abnormality to these cases is as follows:-

Enlarged Turbinateds 4 Deflection of Septum	9
Enlarged Turbinateds only	13
Deflection of nasal Septum only	13
No intra nasal abnormality	25

It will be seen from the above figures that 25 cases out of 60 exhibited no intra nasal lesion. This hardly bears out the statement made by Bosworth of New York that a majority e if not all cases of asthma have some obstructive lesion of the nasal cavity.

the most usual complication. But there is not reason for supposing that this lesion is responsible for the asthmatic condition in view of the fact that a greater proportion of cases - showing equally typical asthmatic manifestations - exhibit no intra nasal abnormality.

The enlargement of the turbinated bodies so frequently found as an intra nasal complication may be an effect graudally brought about by the irritation produced by the turgescent mucous membrane in repeated attacks of long standing cases, and not an exciting cause.

THE RELATION OF SEX .

From the above tables it will be seen that the proportion is 22 males to 38 females.

The usual experience is the reverse of this, but the numbers are insufficient to make the observation of importance.

In conclusion I am led by my experience in the above noted cases, and in a large number of cases unrecorded to believe that the treatment of asthma by masal cauterisation is a method likely to obtain permanent success and requires only to be generally well known to become universally practised.

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TABULATED LIST OF CASES OF SPASMODIC ASTHMA TREATED BY NASAL CAUTERISATION.

PRESENT CONDITION:
TREATMENT AND DATE

RESULT REMARKS E.W., Female, 39.
Enlarged Turbinateds-Severe
type - 12 years.
May 1st. 1905, Cauterised 6
occasions-alternate sides
of septum
A gradual improvement.
Reported 1914 very great
improvement; but having lefthe district, unable to
proceed with treatment.

2. NAME PRESENT CONDITION:

TREATMENT AND DATE
REMARKS.

C.V., Female age 40.
Severe spasms; 2 or 3 days duration with only partial intermission. No nasal abnormality.
May 1905. Attended 3 occasions cauterised.
Reported Jan.15 "never had asthma again."

3. NAME PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT AND DATE

RESULT REMARKS H.S., Male, age 47.
Normal. Severe attacks
very frequent duration- 23
years.
March 1905. Attended 7
times - cauterised.
Complete relief
Last seen in Jan. 1915.

4. NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

A.M., Male, age 55.

No abnormality. Severe - duration 3 years.

Sep. 1905. Two attendances - cauterised.

Reported great improvement.

Native patient not seen since 1905.

TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS.

J.O., Female, age 45.
Enlarged turbinateds - severe duration 7 years.
September 1905 - 4 attendances.
Great Improvement.
Reported in 1915 only one attack
1905 - following influenza.

PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE

RESULT

REMARKS

Enlarged turbinateds.
August 4th.1905. Cauterised 4
times.
Complete relief
Reported 1913.

A.P., Female, age 48.

7. NAME PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT AND DATE

RESULT REMARKS A.P., Female, age 65.
Deflected Septum, enlarged Turbinateds, duration many years.
August 21st.1905. Cauterised 4 times.
Complete relief.
Reported in 1907 no further attack, died that year from appendicitis.

8. NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE

TREATMENT & DA
RESULT
REMARKS

F.C., female, ahe 19.
Deflected Septim; enlarged turbinateds. Duration 4 years.
Cauterised 7 times both sides of Septum on each occasion.
Complete relief.
Reported 1915, free from asthma.
Mother and sister suffered from

asthma. This case yielded more

slowly than case 21 in which there was no nasal disease.

9. NAME PRESENT CONDITION H.D., Male, age 53. Advanced pulmonary phthisis -

asthma 3 years. Deflection nasal septum.

TREATMENT & DATE

5th. September 1905. Cauterised

6 times.

Improved as far as asthma was

concerned.

This case is useful in showing REMARKS that the asthmatic condition

> improved in a condition of phthisis.

RESULT

10. NAME PRESENT CONDITION

A.S., Female, age 35.

Malarial fever - complicated with asthma. Very severe. No ab-

normality.

TREATMENT & DATE

28th. September 1905, 1 atten -

dance - cauterised.

RESULT No improvement. REMARKS

Patient died from pneumonia short

ly after attendance.

11.

NAME PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT & DATE

RESUL T REMARKS H.B., Male, ahe 20.

No nasal disease, duration from

childhood.

30th. September 1905. One attendance. Cauterised.

Complete Relief.

Reported 1910.

12. NAME

PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT AND DATE

RESULT REMARKS W. T., Male, age \$6

Deflected septum - duration 24

years.

14th. October 1905. Cauterised

3 times. (Repert) Report improved.

No report since November, 1905.

13. NAME PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

E.L., Female, age 55.

No nasal disease. Aortic murmur.

Cauterised twice.

Slight improvement.

No report since 26th. October,

14. NAME PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT & DATE

RESULT REMARKS J.B., Male,70.
No nasal disease, duration 10 years.
5th. December, 1905. Cauterised twice within a week.
Complete relief.
Reported 1912.

15. NAME PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT & DATE

RESUL T REMARKS J.P., Male, age 26
Deflected Septum. Duration 3
years.
18th. December, 1905. Cauterised one time left side.
Complete relief.
Appeared to obtain immediate relief.

16. NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

M., female, age 45.
Deflected Septum - 20 years.
Jan. 1906. Cauterised 5 times.
Slight improvement.
DIED OF PNEUMONIA February 1906.

17. NAME .
PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT & DATE

RESULT REMARKS T.S., Male, age 27.
Right turbinated greatly enlarged 15 years.
19th. January, 1906. Cauterised 5 times.
Greatly improved
No report since March, 1906.

18. NAME PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT & DATE

RESULT REMARKS W.R., Male, age 21. Right turbinated greatly enlarged 15 years. Feb. 7th. 1906. Cauterised once.

No report.

No report. Native.

19. NAME PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

B., Female, age 40.
Enlarged turbinateds, duration from childhood.
7/2/06. Cauterised once.
No report.
No report. Native.

PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

T.M., Male, age 30.
No nasal disease. 17 months.
28/2/06. Cauterised once.
No report.
No report. Native.

PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

J.M., Female, age 26.
No nasal disease - four months.
Cauterised three times.
Complete relief.
Sister of case No.8. In this case where no nasal disease relief was sooner obtained.

22. NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULTS

REMARKS

S.B., Male, age 35.
No nasal disease - 15 years.
23rd. March 1906, Cauterised
twice.
Great improvement.
No report since April, 1906.

P.B. Male, age 69. 23. NAME Deflected Septum. R. Turbina-PRESENT CONDITION ted enlatged 25 years. 24/6/06. Cauterised three TREATMENT & DATE occasions. Improved. RESULT Died cancer of stomach 1907. REMARKS B., Female, age 39. 24. NAME Enlarged turbinateds - many years PRESENT CONDITION 11/4/06. Cauterised twice. TREATMENT & DATE Complete relief. RESULT REMARKS Reported 1913. N., Male, age 36. 25. Left turbinated enlarged. PRESENT CONDITION. 18/4/06, Cauterised 5 times. Complete relief. TREATMENT & DATE RESULT Reported 1913 REMARKS 26. NAME V., Male, age 27. Deflected Septum, right turbina-PRESENT CONDITION ted large 2 years. TREATMENT & DATE 10/5/06. Cauterised seven times States he has derived little, if RESULT any benefit. No improvement. Refuses to persevere - 1915. REMARKS still has asthma; not improved. 27. NAME N.P., Male, age 7. PRESENT CONDITION No nasal disease. Duration 3 months. March 1911 - Cauterised 3 times. TREATMENT & DATE RESULT Complete relief. REMARKS Reported 1913.

28. NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
Treatment & Date
RESULT
REMARKS

M.S., female, age 45.
Deflected septum, five years.
21/5/13. Cauterised twice.
No improvement.
Refused further treatment.

PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE

RESULT REMARKS S.A.W., Female, age 32. Enlarged Turbinateds. 23rd. August 1912. Cauterised twice. (Some relief) - improved. Lost sight of.

NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

A.D.B., female, age 55. Enlarged right turbinated. 5/9/12. Cauterised four times. Improved. No further report.

31. NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

B., Female, age 21.
Normal. 6 years.
20/9/12. Cauterised four times.
Improved.
No further report.

32. NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE.
RESULT
REMARKS

S., female, age 64.
Enlarged turbinateds 15 years.
21/9/12. Cauterised five times.
Improved.
No report since 30/12/12.

NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

A., female, age 48.
No nasal disease. One month.
22/9/12. Cauterised four times.
Complete relief
1914 No further attack.

34. NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

J.A., Male, age 27.
No nasal disease. One year.
7/9/12. Cauterised once.
Improvement.
Refused further treatment.

G.A.W., Female, age 33. 35. NAME Enlarged turbinateds - deflected PRESENT CONDITION septum. 31 years. Cauterised twice. TREATMENT & DATE 1/9/12. No improvement. RESULT No further record. REMARKS 36. C.B., female, age 40. NAME Deflected Septum. PRESENT CONDITION 11th. October, 10th. December, TREATMENT & DATE Cauterised, 2/1/14 Cauterised, 21/1/14. IMprovement. RESULT Feels improved after each atten-REMARKS dence; if she would attend regularly would do well possibly 37. NAME H.C., Male, age 37. No nasal disease - 5 years. PRESENT CONDITION 10/3/10. Cauterised six times. TREATMENT & DATE RESULT Complete relief. Reported 1913. REMARKS /38 NAME M.R., Female, age 20. PRESENT CONDITION Deflected Septum @ 18 months. 12/3/13, Cauterised three times. TREATMENT & DATE RESULT Improved. Reported February, 1914. REMARKS 39. NAME E., Female, age 29. Nose normal, 17 years. PRESENT CONDITION TREATMENT & DATE 18/4/13. Cauterised twice. RESUL T Improved. REMARKS 40. NAME Z.P., Male, age 25. PRESENT CONDITION Nose normal. One year.

1910.

Great improvement.

Reported December 1913.

Cauterised 4 times.

TREATMENT & DATE

RESUL T

REMARKS

41. NAME PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

H.C., Female, age 23.
Deflected Septum - from childhcod.
6/5/13. Cauterised once.

No further report.

42. NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
Result
REMARKS

M.R., Female, age 41.
Nose normal - two years.
22/5/13. Cauterised once.
Improvement.
Reported 1914.

43. NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

M.J., Fæmale, age 40. Enlarged turbinateds - 10 years. 27/5/13. Cauterised. No report.

PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

J.S., Female, age 18.
Nose normal. 3 months.
4/6/13 - Cauterised twice.
Improved.

NAME.
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE

RESULT
REMARKS

R.H., Male, age 14.
Enlarged turbinateds.
8th. August, 1914. Cauterised once only.
Great improvement.

46. NAME
PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

J.M., Female, age 21.
Nose normal.
30/2/13. Cauterised three times.
Great improvement.
2/2/14. reported.

M.M., Female, age -47. NAME PRESENT CONDITION Normal. 7th. August, 1913. Cauterised TREATMENT & DATE three times. Complete relief. RESULT 2nd, February, 1914, last reported. REMARKS H.R., Female, age 50. 48. NAME PRESENT CONDITION Enlarged turbinateds. 2/9/14. Cauterised three times. TREATMENT & DATE RESULT Improved. REMARKS No report since 6th.October, 1914 C.V., Female, age 56. 49. NAME Enlarged turbinateds. PRESENT CONDITION 8/9/13. Cauterised three times. TREATMENT & DATE RESULT Improved. REMARKS E.O., Female, age 45. 50. NAME Enlarged turbinateds - Deflected PRESENT CONDITION septum. 39 years. 3rd. October, 1914. TREATMENT & DATE RESULT No report. REMARKS 51. W.D., Male, age 43. NAME PRESENT CONDITION Nose normal. TREATMENT & DATE 13/11/13. Cauterised four times RESULT Improved. REMARKS Mative reports 1915. 52. NAME A.D.P., Female, age 28. PRESENT CONDITION Nose normal. 19/11/14. Cauterised left side. TREATMENT & DATE

No report.

RESULT

REMARKS

PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

R.J.C., Female, age 26.
Deflection - 9 years.
25/11/13, Cauterised three times
Improved.

PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

J.N., Female, age 52.
Enlarged turbinateds - deflection - 2 months.
19/12/13, Cauterised three times
Improved

PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

H.W., Female, age 43.
Enlarged turbinateds & deflection - 28 years.
19/1/14. Cauterised both sides
No report.

PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

E.K., Male, age 25.
Deflection.
22/1/14. Cauterised once.
No report.

PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

C.S., MALE, age 10.
Nose normal - 3 years.
27/3/14. Cauterised three times
Great improvement

PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

F.S., female, age 4.

Nose normal - 10 months.

27/3/14. Cauterised three times Great improvement.

This case is sister of case 57 hereditary tendency - reported June, 1914, no attack.

59. NAME PRESENT CONDITION

TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

G.S., female, age 33.
Deflection - constant severe
asthma 5 years.
10/3/14. Cauterised eight times
Remarkable improvement.
Although not absolutely free
she considers herself cured and
refuses further treatment
January, 1915.

PRESENT CONDITION
TREATMENT & DATE
RESULT
REMARKS

A.F., Female, age 45. Normal - 2 years - not severe. 30/3/14. Cauterised four times. Complete relief Reported January, 1915.