

Medical Department
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Dissertation on
Acute Metrorrhoea

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Case of
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Metritis

By Metritis is generally understood inflammation of the interior of the uterus both of the body and of the neck in the puerperal state, I shall not enter into a detail of the inflammation of the neck of the uterus but the body, internal and external, acute inflammation of the nonimpregnated uterus is a rare disease, this is a fact which is generally admitted by uterine pathologists I believe however that acute Metritis will be found of even less frequent occurrence than it is now supposed to be, when it is no longer confounded with the lateral ligaments a mistake at present frequently made even by experienced practitioners the rarity of acute Metritis is the natural result of the peculiar dense fibromuscular noncellular structure of the body of the uterus, diseases of this nature being but slightly susceptible to inflammation as a necessary consequence of this

veucias Structure if the Uterine System
is Exposed to the Causes of inflam-
-mation its periphery the Mucus surfaces
the Cervix or lateral ligaments which
are so much more highly vitalized
are generally the regions attacked
When the State of the Uterus is mod-
-ified by the Extraordinary develop-
-ment and vitalization that occur
-during pregnancy or during the increase
-of a large fibrous Tumor, we remark
-a very different State of things, if
-the Uterine System is then Exposed
-to Causes of inflammation Espe-
-cially after Parturition the
-base of the organ is frequently
-attacked and Metritis observed
-under these Circumstances Man-
-ifests a degree of intensity and
-a violence unknown in the
-unimpregnated Condition of the
-Uterus but quite consistent
-with its modified Structure
-in reality the Uterus is an
-anatomically a perfectly differ-
-ent organ when unimpregnated
-and when developed by
-impregnation and its

Pathology is as different in ^{the} two
Conditions as its anatomical
The nervous and wonderful changes
Which the uterus undergoes during
its physiological life are indeed
a subject for admiration and
impart extreme interest of the
study of its disease, acute
Metritis generally appears to
affect the entire body of the
uterus, altho no doubt it may
attack a portion only of its
tissue, Metritis occupies the
anterior and sometimes the pos-
-terior wall of the uterus and
sometimes the sides and some-
-times the fundus or apex, the
Symptoms varying in each case,
In all or nearly all cases of acute
Metritis that I have seen, the
entire organ including the cervix
was apparently affected, the
inflammation might be more
intense in one organ than
in another, but this is a

point rather difficult to determine
as far as I have discovered in my
practice, acute inflammation in the
unimpregnated uterus seldom extends
to the peritoneal investing mem-
-branes as so often occurs in puer-
-peral inflammation, Indeed I only
recalled having seen two or three
instances in which the symptoms
of peritoneal inflammation were so
decidedly marked as to render
the existence of peritonitis certain
altho' cases of the kind have
occurred, I have no doubt, but
not as often as sometimes sup-
posed, as predisposing causes to
acute metritis and to infla-
-mmation to the uterine system
generally, I will mention a Gault's
with plethoric temperaments which
are more especially prone or pe-
-culiarly susceptible to such inflam-
-mation the uterine system
which I have mentioned as char-
-acterising from the first that

There is a great many female persons who are affected in after life with the various forms of this disease. It would seem as if them either the Menstrual Menorrhagicum was so great as to distend beyond measure the uterine tissue thus giving rise to Extreme Congestion and pain ~~pain~~ or as if the Uterus was so peculiarly sensitive that even the physiological Menstrual Congestion could not take place without its Sensibility being anomaly anomalous - caused, this physiological condition which may exist which may exist independently of any physical imperfection lesion or disease is evidently one of the principal predisposing causes of Uterine Inflammation. The chief causes that tend immediately to induce acute Metritis are arrested menstruation Sexual Excess

and the Extension of Chronic inflammation from the neck the origin to these, I will also add as occasionally causing acute inflammation all kind of surgical interference with the uterine organs, such as the cauterization of ulceration of the Cervix, the use of vaginal injections of Dressings and any influence that suddenly arrests menstruation such as Exposure to cold or damp or wet feet, or mental emotion especially in its incipient stage may give rise to acute Metritis these latter causes are generally considered to be capable of occasioning acute inflammation even in the interval of menstruation, I have observed in unimpregnated Uterus apart from the menstrual period except as the result of some physical injury of a blow severe fall or of the cauterization of the Cervix,

The symptoms of acute Metritis

are local and general or Sympa-
thetic. The most prominent local
Symptoms are severe pain deeply sit-
uated in the Hypogastric region
above and behind the Pubis, ~~and~~
^{radiating} ~~mediating~~ into the ovarian region
and sometimes down the thighs
accompanied by a very disagreeable
sensation of pelvic weight and
uneasiness. There is also general
Speaking severe pain in the loins
or lumbosacral region from the
umbilicus to the groin very sensitive
to the touch but slight pressure
on the abdominal parities does not
very much exacerbate the deep
seated pain even when made
immediately above the pubis.

On Examining diligently the Vagina
is generally found hot and dry
from arrested secretion, the
Cervix is swollen and often
but not always sensitive to
the touch, the body of the
Uterus is no doubt always

enlarged but any attempt to
appreciate its size by seizing it
or displacing it through the Me-
dium of Cervix is attended
with too much pain to be per-
sisted in. The inflamed uterus
is indeed so exquisitely painful
that the slightest pressure exercised
directly upon it through the vagina
occasions severe pain often giving
rise instantaneously to a sensation
of nausea

Notwithstanding this excessive
sensitiveness of the uterus it is
impossible in every case to ascertain
without putting the patient to
any great amount of pain that
it is the uterus itself

The sensitive tumor is the
immediate which is the seat of
inflammation and not the
adjaining tissues

The sensitive tumor
is the immediately connected ^{with} the
Cervix occupying the medium line
and is generally painful and

is Evident out on the Right Side
and on the left of the line
unless however the Uterus be nat-
-urally lying transversely from right
to left as is sometimes the case
When the inflamed organ will
Extend more to the right than
the left side. This is a very
important point to determine
as in inflammation of the lateral
ligaments the tumor is known by
the inflamed tissues is generally
applied annexed as it were
to the side of Uterus so as
only to form one mass. Owing
to the great sensitiveness of
the Uterus if touched or moved
directly or indirectly the Patient
is unable to walk or even
to stand, and when sitting
in bed the body is generally
so inclined as to take off
all strain from the abdom-
-inal region. When lying
down the patient always
lies on her back.

That being the position in which
the uterus presses least on the
surrounding organs, the passage of
feces through the rectum is often
attended with great pain owing
to its position immediately behind
the uterus, This is more Espe-
cially the case when the motions
are costipated, They are sometimes
covered or coated with mucus
showing an irritable state of ut-
erine mucus membranes, There is
also frequently considerable ir-
ritation and pain about the
bladder accompanied by more
or less disuria

The vascular and
nervous connections between the
uterus the rectum and the
bladder is too intimate not to
suffer when one of them is
inflamed severely,

In acute Metritis there is gen-
erally speaking no discharge at
first the vaginal secretions being
arrested as well as that from
the uterine cavity

Sometimes however when the inflammation extends to the lining membrane of the uterus there is more abundant secretion of a serisanguinolent fluid from the uterus. On a decline of the inflammation a copious discharge of a variable nature will take place in most cases. More especially if the inflammation extends to the ovario

Acute Metritis is always accompanied by considerable febrile action, the skin is hot the pulse quick but not small and thready as when the peritonæum is compromised the tongue is coated over with white fur and continued nausea is almost invariably experienced but it is seldom that it produces vomiting, thirst, headache and restlessness and the bowels are some

times inclined to run off more
Especially if there is much Ex-
-citement. The Breasts are
swollen and painfull in most
Cases. I have found in some
Cases hysterical Symptoms and
in some that is wanting,

I find the Symptoms varying
almost in every Case
In some Cases it is very dif-
-ficult to detect Metritis either
by a digital Examination or by
pressure over the pubis

Progress and Termination
Generally the inflammation gives
way to treatment in from five to
ten days resolution taking place
owing to the absence of cellular
tissue of the Uterus the Structure
of the body of the Uterus, it
is thought by some that there
is no pus in the substance of
the Uterus but I am inclined to
think that there is, there is
a purulent Collection in the
Uterus and it discharges itself

through the cervix uteri when the
matter forms near either parties
the inflammation is generally
propagated to the cellular tissue
contained between the the lat-
-eral ligaments and the pus
finds its way out of the
pelvis as upon the inflamma-
-tion and supuration have
previously ^{usually} existed in the lig-
-aments which frequently occurs
and in fact it is so frequent
the case that they are suppura-
-ed when acute Metritis does
not terminate by resolution
or by extension to the lateral
ligaments it passes into the
chronic state and then nearly
always becomes partial,
I have never seen a case of
acute Metritis terminate fatal
where the uterus was not or
had not been pregnant a short
time before or at the time.
It is owing I would think to

The inflammation not extending
itself to the peritoneum and to
the uterus not being an organ
having functions to perform
necessary to the preservation
of life, A vast amount of chronic
disease may consequently exist
without life being directly endan-
gered.

Prognosis

Acute Metritis apart
from the purperal state being very
rarely a fatal disease there is
but little to fear for the life
of the patient provided reme-
dial measures be applied to
subdue the inflammation, it
may however especially if not
treated with sufficient energy
and promptitude, by passing into
the Chronic Stage prove the
source of very serious and
prolonged evils.

These are diseases
that occasion more suffering than
Chronic Metritis and Chronic inf-

of lateral ligaments,

Diagnosis

Although it is not difficult to recognise acute Metritis in a sublethal form its existence is not unsequently passed over unperceived, many practitioners are satisfied with the ^{mere} knowledge that there is inflammation in the lower abdominal region and the case is treated on the anti-styptic principals calling it inflammation of the bowels, In some instances this being the case the treatment thus is based on such obscure notions of the real state of the patient is apt to fall short of the necessities of the case and only subverts the morbid symptoms to leave behind the seeds of future and more untractable disease, It is of the greatest importance in inflammation that the precise

That seat of the morbid action
should be determined, no means
should be neglected that can
give the necessary information
of diagnosis. The diseases with
which Nephritis is most likely
to be confounded is that of
inflammation of the bladder
and lateral ligaments as that
both produce the same kind
of pains and the same general
reaction, In addition however
to the symptoms peculiar to
each which differ considerably
by a careful digital examination
by passing the fore finger right
hand in the vagina behind
and above the pubis and press-
ing with the fingers of the
left hand over the lower abd-
ominal region the state of
the bladder may be ascertained
If it is inflamed pressure
will occasion great pain if
not the pain will be but

light, I have thus ascertained
in several very obscure cases
that acute Cystitis was taken
for uterine inflammation

In one case particular of
retained inflammation of the
Urethra in a young unmarried
Lady, and retention of the Urine
was the consequence, and
the bladder not being relieved
for some time owing to the
patient conceiving her suffer-
ing Cystitis ensued, the
symptoms of inflammation shew-
ing more or less intense irradiation
all over the pelvic region &
throwing considerable obscurity over
the case, but by a careful
vaginal examination the uterus
was found free from sensitiveness
and readily movable while the
bladder was found inflamed
and acutely sensitive,
In a case of inflammation

of the lateral ligaments pain
lies more to one side of the
Median line and the finger passed
up towards the uterus detects the
inflammatory tumor lying on
one side of the uterus

Pathological Anatomy

Acute

Metritis as I have seen so seldom
prove fatal that there is scarcely
any attempt to be found for
a description of the unimpreg-
nated uterus, I have noticed
some of the writers for instance
Churchill, Pains Bottom, Mor,
H. on the diseases of the uterus
say that the state of the uterus
of the female that had died
of nonpurpereal Metritis would
be the same as purpereal Metritis
as I never have seen a case of
the kind myself, therefore I
can only repeat these as
authority, and say that the

Probably would be in a normal
state

Jan 29th 1853

James M. Drayton