

### On the Duration of Pregnancy in the Human Subject.

BLAU and CRISTOFOLETTI. *Monats. für Geburts. und Gynäkol.*  
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VON WINCKEL has recently re-opened the question of the duration of pregnancy, especially with regard to cases in which the child is unusually heavy and large. He takes out the cases in which such children occurred and reckons in them the duration of pregnancy, and compares the figures so obtained with the average duration in all cases. Von Winckel takes 4,000 grammes weight and 50 c.m. length to be an unusually heavy child, and out of 30,000 births he found 10,007 such children. By comparing the duration of pregnancy in these cases with the average duration of all, he comes to the conclusion that out of every 233 births in his series *one* unusually heavy child had a pregnancy duration of over 302 days. Von Winckel comes to the following conclusions:—Prolongation of pregnancy can no longer be doubted, as the pregnancy duration in unusually heavy children shows; the frequency of the latter in great lying-in charities is about 3.15 per cent., and of these 14.5 per cent., or 1 in 233 births, have an intra-uterine life of over 302 days; the frequency of all delayed births is about 2.8 per cent.; the lower duration limit of such heavy children is 240 days, the upper 336 days. To test the correctness of these figures the authors investigated the material in the clinics of Schauta and Chrobak from 1892—1901. In order to more completely compare the cases the authors have divided the children into three groups, viz.: those with a weight of 2,800—3,500 grammes, those of 3,500—4,000 grammes, and those of 4,000 grammes and upwards. Out of 68,032 births there were 1,778 children of 4,000 grammes and upwards. Out of these cases there were 1,031 in which the pregnancy duration, counted from the first day of the last period, could be calculated; and in 150 this was over 300 days, and in 135 over 302 days; or 14.5 per cent. over 300 days, and 13 per cent. over 302 days. These figures bear out v. Winckel, whose percentages were 16.3 per cent. with a duration of over 300 days, and 14.5 per cent. over 302 days. The less heavy children in the authors' statistics also bear out the statements to some extent, as there were 6.2 per cent. delayed births among the first group, and 9.3 per cent. among the second. Thus it can be seen that there is an

increasing percentage of delayed births as one reckons, according to the weight of the infant. It is open to question whether the method of reckoning the pregnancy duration from the last menstrual period is sufficiently reliable for statistics of this kind, but it must be said that taking the date of cohabitation is equally open to question, as it is well known that cohabitation and conception are not by any means simultaneous. However one may criticise these statistics, it is quite clear that from a medico-legal point of view they are extremely important, and point to the possibility of the legitimacy of a child born even 336 days after regular cohabitation especially if it was unusually heavy and large.

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