

Acute Yellow Atrophy of the Liver in Pregnancy.

BERTINO (*La Ginecologia*, July, 1908), discussing nine cases of jaundice in pregnancy, draws special attention to two which, beginning as simple catarrhal jaundice, assumed the fatal form of acute yellow atrophy. Each of the patients had suffered from profound anæmia in a pregnancy twelve months previously, from which they had not entirely recovered, and each suffered a relapse when the second pregnancy began. The first case occurred during a severe epidemic of jaundice in Parma, when many persons of both sexes were struck down by the disease. The

other case seemed to be idiopathic in origin, but the patient, in addition to her anæmia, had to endure the strain of a twin pregnancy. The study of these cases has led Bertino to the following conclusions:—(1) If jaundice, either epidemic or sporadic, occurs in a pregnant woman, it easily develops more serious symptoms and passes into acute yellow atrophy. Every form of jaundice in pregnancy should therefore be regarded as serious and the prognosis should be guarded; (2) among the many causes which determine the aggravation of the symptoms, the most important are those which induce changes in the parenchyma of the liver, already in a condition of impaired resistance owing to the increase of work thrown upon it, and the ease with which auto-intoxication occurs. Among such causes also may be reckoned twin pregnancies because of the great danger of auto-intoxication through renal strain, and blood diseases like anæmia which lead to fatty degeneration of the viscera; (3) the symptomatology of atrophy is always that of an acute process of auto-intoxication; in this respect atrophy resembles eclampsia, though in the latter the liver symptoms are secondary to, and never so severe as, those of the kidney; (4) whenever jaundice shows itself intractable to treatment and is complicated by albuminuria, delivery should be induced at once, since by this means alone will graver evil be averted. Neither therapeutic nor obstetric measures will avail, once the symptoms of acute yellow atrophy begin, as the alteration of the hepatic parenchyma and the toxæmia are then so advanced that termination of pregnancy brings no relief even though the pregnancy is, in most cases, the cause of auto-intoxication.

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