

A STETHOSCOPE FOR AUSCULTATING THE FETAL HEART*

BY MORRIS LEFF, M.D., NEW YORK, N. Y.

THE stethoscopes used for auscultating the fetal heart have been the same as those used for the chest. The physical contour of the abdomen should require a different type of instrument. The use of the ear directly is an uncomfortable and unesthetic procedure which should be reserved for exceptional occasions.

The stethoscope presented in Fig. 1 has some features which make it especially suitable. It consists of two parts (Fig. 1): *A* is analogous to the chestpiece, and *B* resembles the usual binaurals. Part *A*, or the bell, consists of a metal weight three inches in diameter and weighs two pounds. Its undersurface has a concavity, at the apex of which is an opening, which is continuous with the handle or stem of the instrument. This handle is hollow and is connected with an adaptor to the binaurals *B*.

The advantages of this stethoscope† are as follows:

1. The weight of the instrument is sufficient to keep it in place on the abdomen, without the need of extra pressure.
2. As no outside pressure is necessary, it eliminates the friction sounds which are produced by the fingers or rubber bands.

*Presented before the Section of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the New York Academy of Medicine, October 22, 1929.

†Manufactured by Geo. Tieman and Co., 107 East 28th St., New York,

3. Its greater surface and the fact that it can be moved from one spot on the abdomen to another quickly, facilitate the localization of the sounds.

4. There is no strain produced when listening to the sounds for any length of time.

5. On account of its larger surface its weight is distributed over a bigger area, and it thereby disturbs the patient less than the pressure of the ordinary stethoscope.

6. The fetal heart sounds can be heard while there are noises in the room.

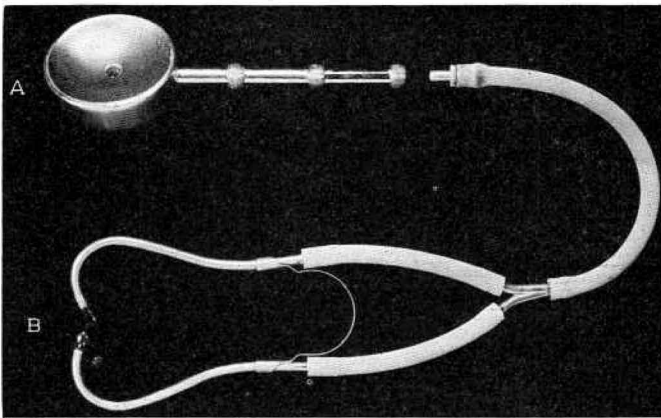


Fig. 1.—Fetal heart stethoscope; A, bell; B, binaurals.

7. The hands are left free, either to hold a watch, to compare the fetal and maternal pulse, or for any other purpose.

8. It can be placed under the sterile sheet on the abdomen during a delivery, and the nurse can watch the fetal heart sounds at all times.

9. It is also useful when doing a Rubin test. The operator himself can listen to the sound of the air passing through the tubes, while it leaves his hands free to do the test.

Both doctors and nurses who have used this stethoscope find it preferable to the ordinary type.

15 EAST ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH STREET.