

DIAGNOSIS OF EARLY PREGNANCY

To the Editor: A sign of early pregnancy has been described by Labhardt in the *Zentralblatt für Gynäkologie*, 1914, xxxviii, 1017. He described as an original contribution the discovery of a sign of pregnancy occurring as early as the fourth or fifth week, even before, of a livid discoloration of the

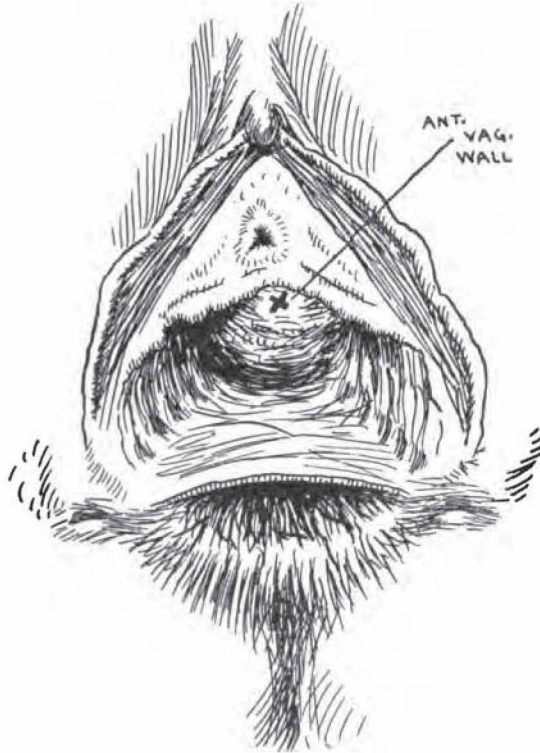


Fig. 1. Jacquemin's spot.

vagina. It consisted of the presence of a band, livid in color, running from one lesser labium to the other in the region just below the urethral opening. He believed that it was due to the congestion of the numerous small vessels running between the bulbs of the vestibule on either side. These vessels lie directly beneath the mucous membrane and are the first to show the congestion.

I have no wish to cause a discussion over the priority of the discovery of this sign, but I believe that it was discovered by a Frenchman named Jacquemin, and was described in a textbook by Parent-Duchatelet, which was translated into German by von Becker in 1837. Kluge, Professor of Midwifery at Berlin, also described this sign after Jacquemin.

In "A Study of One Hundred Cases of Early Pregnancy," I described¹ Jacquemin's sign and drew attention to the spot below the urethra which was first congested, as follows: "In this series of cases, it was found that this hypertrophy of the vessels and venous congestion of the vagina occurred first at a spot upon the anterior vaginal wall about 2 cm. below the orifice of the urethra. This spot later enlarged to spread the violet hue over all the vagina. This spot, called by the author "Jacquemin's spot" (Fig. 1), did not at first show upon the surface of the mucous membrane; as the mucous membrane here has creases and crevices, the sign was seen as streaks of livid, bluish purple at the bottom of these furrows. The phenomenon may best be seen at its first appearance by separating the labia and stretching the mucous membrane of the anterior wall, so that these creases may be opened and the engorged veins exposed. As will be seen from the table, the sign was observed in 57 per cent of the 100 cases before the thirteenth week. In 43 per cent it was absent. It was absent in the very early weeks of pregnancy, present slightly from the seventh to the tenth week, and commonly after the tenth week. As pregnancy advances it is present in a greater proportion of cases, and after the thirteenth week it is a very reliable sign."

This sign was also described in my book entitled *Studies in Gynecology and Obstetrics*.

My article was accompanied by numerous illustrations, the first of which accompanies this letter, and shows the point described by Labhardt and which I, wishing to give credit where credit is due, named "Jacquemin's spot." My article was widely reviewed and was written to describe another sign of pregnancy which I believed to be really new and original with me.

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¹ Am. J. Obst., 1908, lvii.