

A practical point to be remembered is that pregnant patients are more easily alarmed than they would be at other times. The treatment therefore should be given whenever possible by one experienced in the technique, so that the minimum of discomfort may be caused to the patients, and that they may not be deterred from attending regularly and carrying out the treatment fully.

It is well known that many women requiring treatment fail to seek it either through ignorance of their condition, or because they do not know where to obtain treatment. This is a matter in which Health Visitors and Midwives with modern training can do much as they have access to the homes, and usually have the confidence of the women.

In conclusion, the points I should like to emphasize are :—

1. That diagnosis should be early and accurate.
2. That treatment should be immediate, adequate, and easily accessible.

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#### Notification of Pregnancy.

By S. G. MOORE, M.D., D.P.H., M.O.H., Huddersfield (Member).

THE suggestion that the notification of pregnancy should be introduced has been met by antagonism on the part of two classes of persons. One, those who are unaware of the suffering, diseases and dangers associated with pregnancy, and, quite naturally, are sentimentally averse to any intrusion on the privacy of the woman at that period. Two, those who fear lest their place, prestige, or interests should be affected adversely by such system.

It is my principal object in submitting the following facts and considerations to you, to show, first, that there is need for additional care and attention to be devoted to women who are in the act of discharging the primal function of their being ; secondly, that certain conditions being observed, neither class of objector need have any apprehension ; and, thirdly, that through the notification of pregnancy, and through the notification of pregnancy only, substantial benefits can be afforded to pardo-poetics.

Little time need be spent with the first of these objects. In fact, to those who are familiar with the reports of the Local Government Board on the subject, nothing need be said at all, but for the others it may be worth while to call attention to the accompanying tabulation of deaths from parturition in the County Borough of Huddersfield from January, 1906, to December, 1918. The experience of Huddersfield may be regarded as typical of the experience of other industrial towns of the country.

The deaths are arranged in classes. A mere inspection shows that a great majority of deaths in childbed result from preventable causes. One is not supposed to be swayed by sentiment in these matters, but surely in

DEATHS FROM PARTURITION IN THE COUNTY BOROUGH OF HUDDERSFIELD DURING THE PERIOD JANUARY, 1906 TO DECEMBER, 1918.

	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.	Total.
Albuminuria and eclampsia...	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Albuminuria ...	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Eclampsia ...	—	1	7	7	1	1	3	2	5	1	2	2	3	41
Puerperal fever ...	3	2	2	4	3	1	1	3	1	—	1	1	—	35
Septic absorption ...	1	—	—	3	—	1	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	22
Peritonitis-convulsions ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9
Pneumonia ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2
Hæmorrhage ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	1	2	—	1	2
Placenta prævia ...	—	1	1	1	3	2	1	—	2	1	1	1	1	13
Ante-partum hæmorrhage ...	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	1	11
Retained placenta ...	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Cæsarean section ...	—	2	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	5
Contracted pelvis ...	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	3
Parturition ...	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Parturition, difficult crani-	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
otomy ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Induced labour ...	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Embolism, pulmonary ...	2	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	3	1	—	3	—	10
Embolism, cerebral ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	3
Ectopic gestation ...	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	4
Vomiting of pregnancy ...	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	2
Prematurity, endocarditis ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Heart disease, organic ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Purpura hæmorrhagica, abor-	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
tion ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Phlegmasia alba dolens ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Ovarian tumour, ruptured	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	2
uterus ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Menngitis, convulsions ...	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Malnutrition ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Anæmia ...	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Gangrenous hæmorrhoids after	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
childbirth ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Cystitis, acute ...	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Mania ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2
	15	10	14	17	10	11	9	9	17	9	8	9	9	147

this case to be so is at least excusable. Surely no death is more likely to excite compassionate feeling than that of a woman who is either about to, or has just, become a mother, and surely also we ought to spare no efforts—we ought to let nothing stand in the way—of doing everything which may be done to save her.

On the 1st of January, 1916, I introduced a system for the voluntary notification of pregnancy in Huddersfield. I did so amid dismal prophecies and direful forebodings, which I mention for two reasons: (1) Because of their inherent significance, and (2) because experience shows that they were altogether unwarranted—that they had no justification in fact. The system has worked without difficulty, or complication of any kind. That statement is absolute. During the first year 11 per cent. of the total known pregnancies were notified; during the second year 24 per cent; during the third year 34 per cent. These figures show, I think, beyond peradventure that the system is by no means unpopular among those people who are best able to form a good opinion of its merits. The recent percentages would be increased but for the fact that an association whose headquarters are in London does not notify. I believe (but I may not put it forward as an ascertained fact) that the local people would notify their cases but for the knowledge that it would be unpopular at headquarters. One can only wait for an educated public opinion to get rid of this sort of thing.

But notification of pregnancy ought to be surrounded with every care, and carried on with much tact. In the first place, knowledge of a woman's condition ought not to be sent to a public authority without her consent. Again, one can readily understand the objection of a woman holding a position in the country recognised by statute (I mean a registered midwife) if a case which she has notified is to be visited and examined by a nurse, health visitor or another midwife. Therefore, the visits under such a system in Huddersfield are made by duly qualified and legally registered medical women. Also, I do not conceive that it is the function of the Sanitary Authority to provide treatment for such cases. When any condition is discovered which calls for treatment the woman is advised to go at once to consult her usual doctor. The need for her to do so is fully, and carefully explained, and a second visit is made, after a short interval, to encourage her, and to ascertain that she has actually obtained the needed help. And, finally, it is important that everybody concerned in the work should bear it in mind, continually, that it is all voluntary. They may only go into the home of a woman in the capacity of a sympathetic friend, they must not under any circumstances whatever permit even the semblance of authority to appear in their words, voice, or manner, and they are to bear in mind that they must never do or say any thing which may in any way reflect, however remotely, on the prestige of a midwife, or anybody else.

The system, as it is worked in Huddersfield, confers the following benefits on the women whose cases are brought into the activities of the Public Health Department.

There is the obvious case where, as the result of one, or another, abnormal condition, medical help is called for. There are other cases where suffering, or perhaps danger, results from the non-recognition of some fact, which, however recondite it may be to the woman, is simple and obvious to the trained medical practitioner, and where a few brief words confer substantial good on the recipient. There is the opportunity to dissipate many injurious but popular superstitions, and of engendering a normal belief in the normal state of affairs; of exploding the fallacy that pregnancy is inevitably associated with suffering on the part of the woman, a disastrous idea, which is far more common than one would suppose in the absence of experience.

But material help can be provided in many ways. For example, in appropriate cases we send into the homes, women, who practically take charge during the critical period, and thus carry help and comfort to places where, owing to a large family of small children, conditions indicate the need. Also we send temporary assistants who are able to bake, wash, or help in the housework in other ways; and in a variety of directions which will readily occur to the mind, help is given where help is needed. In no case is there any suggestion, or suspicion, of Poor Law relief, or of charity. That is sedulously avoided. It is explained to the people that these things are theirs by right, if any need for explanation arises.

I think it would be unwise for me to refrain from saying that in certain circles there is a tendency not only to prevent the introduction of this system, but even to smother discussion on it. I think it is particularly regrettable that this should be the case. I by no means approve of all the methods which are the vogue, or the fashion, in work for the benefit of mothers and children to-day. I am satisfied that some of it is misguided and much of it is extravagant—judged by its results—but it is obvious that everything which tends in the right direction is to be welcomed and encouraged, and it is by no means the case that the notification of pregnancy is antagonistic to other good works, or to the interests of any individual or class of individual. I believe that the proper thing to do, is to reflect that there is no inherent antagonism between this and any other system, but that, given goodwill and a wholly unselfish desire to help those who need help, the notification of pregnancy may well fit into any scheme of this kind. Moreover, it is obvious that through its means, good can be done which cannot be done by any other means. I, therefore, commend the notification of pregnancy for examination, in the confident belief that the more critically it is examined the more desirable it will appear.

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