Clinical Notes

The scraping and nitric acid did not eradicate the spirillum, and after several subsequent applications of carbolic lotion it was still present in large numbers. A fortnight later antiseptic treatment had brought about a healthy condition admitting of successful skin-grafting. Spirilla were not found on the now normal granulating surface.

Cultivation from the original scraping resulted in a growth of bacteria only. The peripheral blood of the patient was examined several times and the boy was spleno-punctured, but with negative results in each case. Enlargement of the spleen had been noted on admission, but this organ diminished to the normal size while the patient was still in hospital. There were no spirilla in the mouth.

The temperature was raised while the ulcer was at its worst, but as the local disorder improved the body heat declined. Attempts were made to induce the disease in a monkey and in a guinea-pig, but neither the bacteria nor the spirilla produced any appreciable local or constitutional effect on these animals. Although we know so little about this spirillum, we think it well to make a note of it as a possible help to other observers.

A CASE OF ABSCESS OF THE LIVER, FOLLOWING GUNSHOT WOUND.

By Capt. H. W. K. Read.
Royal Army Medical Corps.

No. 22013 Trooper P. T., of Marshall's Horse, was wounded on March 24, 1902, during an engagement at Rhenoster Valley, about thirty miles from Sutherland, Cape Colony, whilst standing by the side of his horse. At the time he was hit he hardly felt any pain. The wound of entrance was in the right hypochondriac region, about 1½ inches below the eighth costal cartilage. The direction of the wound was oblique from before backwards. The wound of entrance equalled in size that of the wound of exit. Some of his clothing, together with a brass button, were missing where the bullet entered. About ten minutes after he was hit he felt great pain in the part, and profuse hemorrhage followed. He remained in Sunderland Hospital for about a month, and was then transferred to the Stationary Hospital, Magersfontein, Cape Colony.

On arrival, after a journey of six days (80 miles) by donkey convoy, his condition was grave. Temperature 104°F., with pain and enlargement over the liver region, the dulness extending 3 inches below the xiphoid cartilages, and upwards to the fourth interspace. The superficial veins over the part were very much dilated, and there was a feeling of deep-seated fluctuation on pressure. He was placed under chloroform on May 12, and an aspirating needle passed downwards and forwards through the eighth interspace in the mid-axillary line into a large cavity,
Clinical Notes

from which were removed sixty fluid ounces of dark-looking fluid consisting of pus and broken-down liver substance.

Owing to his debilitated condition it was agreed to leave the further operation for a few days. He was very much relieved by the aspiration, while the temperature fell to normal. The only matter of which he complained was hunger. His general condition having improved, and as there were signs of the abscess cavity again filling, together with irregular rises of temperature followed by sweating, it was decided to open freely and drain. On May 26 he was placed under chloroform by Civil Surg. J. A. Robertson. An incision 2½ inches long was made in the eighth interspace between the axillary lines, reaching down to and opening up the abscess cavity. The finger was readily passed into a large space filled with dark-coloured fluid mixed with shreddy, broken-down material. The cavity was carefully washed out with warm boracic lotion and a piece of large drainage tube about 4 inches long was inserted. The tube was removed and shortened each day, while the cavity was frequently irrigated with warm boracic lotion. The temperature remained irregular for three days following the operation, being 98.6° F. in the morning, rising to 101° F. at night. The discharge rapidly decreased, the patient’s health improved, he increased in weight, and finally made an uninterrupted recovery. The only symptom he complained of, as after the former operation, was hunger.

The case is interesting mainly for the reason that the abscess resulted from a bullet wound and the introduction of a foreign body into a presumably healthy organ.

The only symptom complained of after the operation was very great hunger. Physiologists may be interested in this symptom, especially as the right lobe of the liver was the part affected.