

- 634 Acute Alcoholic Hepatitis. E. A. Porta, A. A. Stein, and B. J. Bergman.
Am. J. Pathol. 46, 657 (April, 1965).

Electron microscopic studies of liver biopsies from three women with alcoholism exhibiting similar clinical features showed that fatty hepatocellular changes leading to the formation of fatty cysts were one of the most consistent findings. More than 30% of the fatty hepatocytes, including those forming the wall of the cysts, showed bizarre "finger-print-like" aggregates of parallel arrays of membrane studded with glycogen particles. Mitochondrial enlargement, a common feature in these organelles, was accompanied by alterations of cristae and matrices and abundant crystalline inclusions (myelin figures). Focal cytoplasmic degradation found in some hepatocytes suggested a relationship to the formation of Mallory bodies, and it appeared that any of the altered cytoplasmic constituents could participate in the formation of these structures. Ceroid pigment was consistently found in Kupffer and reactive mesenchymal cells. Fibrosis appeared mainly as thin connective tissue fibril bands located in the spaces of Disse, frequently appearing to abut into hepatocytes and also probably contributing to sinusoidal "capillarization." -- J. Am. Med. Assn. References & Reviews

- 635 Law-Medicine Notes. Change in Common Law. W. J. Curran.
New Eng. J. Med. 272, 961-962 (May 6, 1965).

The Common Law, the body of law resulting from precedent, is also changing as it develops. Since World War II very significant developments have occurred in the law of torts, the portion of the law that encompasses medical malpractice. One is invasion of privacy, e.g. the presence of unauthorized persons at medical examinations or operations and the unauthorized use of patients' records in publicity releases or in reports on research. Physicians or hospitals can avoid most of the problems in this area by obtaining the patient's consent in advance. Another new cause of action is that for injury to the unborn child. Actions involving only mental suffering, unaccompanied by physical injury or contact, reflect greater confidence on the part of the judges in the validity of medical and psychologic testimony in this area. Decisions in many states, such as Michigan and California, have removed from governmental bodies and nonprofit agencies legal immunity to tort actions. These decisions displaced Common Law, which goes back centuries and is imbedded in the ringing imperious phrase, "The King can do no wrong." It took an audacious court to strike down this rule and subject another branch of the Government to hundreds of thousands of dollars in liability suits. The Wilmington General Hospital v. Manlove Case (53 Del. 339, 174 A 2d 135 (1961)) overruled a previously well settled principle of medical jurisprudence by imposing a requirement on a hospital to accept an emergency-care patient on the grounds that the hospital incurred this obligation by opening an emergency service and making it known to the public. This resembles statutes in Europe, which require physicians to stop at emergencies under pain of criminal penalties. Many states are now expanding the standard of care from "community rule" to a generalized one covering all physicians in the state on the theory that the standards of good medical care are now basically the same throughout the jurisdiction.

- 636 The Clinical Acceleration of Healing with a Cartilage Preparation. A Controlled Study.
J. F. Prudden and J. Allen. J. Am. Med. Assn. 192, 352-356 (May 3, 1965).

A controlled study of the wound acceleration induced by fine-grind acid-pepsin digested calf tracheal cartilage has been made in 15 human volunteers. Small paired skin incisions were made in precisely corresponding anatomical sites, and one wound treated with the powder atomization while the other wound served as a control. Closure was identical. After varying (7 to 14 days) intervals of time, the wounds were excised with a margin and the resulting defects closed. The tensile strengths of the wounds were then determined. In 12 of the 15 wound pairs, the treated wound was stronger. The overall percentage increase in tensile strength resulting from the treatment was 42%, and the difference is statistically highly significant. The effectiveness of this material in the acceleration of human wound healing is considered established.

-- Authors' abst.

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