



Multiple Pregnancy

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In the human race it is an abnormal condition for a mother to have more than one offspring at a time. The causation of multiple pregnancy is unknown. Heredity plays a strong part and plural birth occurs oftener in fertile races and also in the coloured races. According to the records, twins are born in 17 cases, triplets once in 7,100 cases, quadruplets once in 757,000 cases and quintuplets in 41,600,000 cases. There are 35 cases of quintuplets on record and there is a case reported of a birth of sextuplets.

Twins, or the birth of twins, is of great scientific interest. They may be single-ovum or double-ovum twins. In the first type they come from one ovum and are always of the same sex. There is a single placenta only and although each child has its own amnion, usually one chorion envelope. Usually there are two cords to the placenta but there may be just one which divides near the foetuses. The children are usually very much alike in size and in mental and physical characteristics. In the double-ovum twins they come from two ova. They are not necessarily of the same sex, there will be two separate placentas and two sets of membranes.

A multiple pregnancy usually causes the mother considerable distress during pregnancy due to the abnormal abdominal distention. She may have swelling of the feet and other

symptoms of toxemia. Other dangers which frequently occur are eclampsia, antipartum and postpartum hæmorrhage and sepsis. The outlook of the babies also is not very bright because a prematurity both before and after viability (the ability to live after birth) is common. So usually they are small, weak infants.

The following points make the diagnosis of twins certain: Palpation; feeling of two heads; auscultation; the hearing of two distinct foetal hearts; X-Ray; the seeing of two skeletons.

During the last two months we were fortunate to attend six twin births in our hospital. This is rather unusual and a description or brief case study of each delivery follows:

Case 1.

On the 17th of June, 1951, a new patient was admitted who was given the diagnosis of pregnancy. Her pre-natal examination showed that she was perfectly normal. On the 19th morning she began having regular and frequent labor pains and was taken to the delivery room. In the afternoon, her membranes were ruptured by the doctor, and after a few minutes she delivered a baby boy which was followed by another, a girl, to our surprise! Both babies were in breech presentation but they were in good condition. The mother had a

second degree laceration which was repaired and was given special care. She recovered nicely with no complications.

Case 2.

This patient was the most interesting, although a sad case. She came to the clinic for the first time on the 5th of July, 1951, and had tonic contractions of the uterus which made her abdomen as hard as a board. The doctors proposed to perform a low cervical Caesarean Section immediately, when they were surprised to find two premature babies, both girls. However, the mother due to pulmonary embolism died two hours after the operation. The babies were taken home although against medical advice.

Case 3.

This case was really diagnosed twins. She was admitted as a normal case but with quite a large sized abdomen. She delivered two baby girls who looked exactly alike, both normal. One baby weighed 5 lb. 12 oz. and the other 5 lbs. 2 oz. These two babies really had just the same features. All three of them were well when discharged.

Case 4.

A patient who was admitted in the hospital with pregnancy and decompensated heart as well as hypertension. On the 10th July at 5 A. M. she complained of slight abdominal pain for which she was given injection of morphia 1/8 gr. Within two hours she was delivered of twins, a baby and a girl, weighing 2 lbs. 5 oz., 2 lb. 4 oz., respectively. They were premature. The second baby expired on the same day and the

first one lived for four days. The mother was discharged in good condition.

Case 5.

The fifth lady came to clinic on the 11th July, 1951, for the first time. On the same day she delivered twins, one baby boy and the other a baby girl prematurely. The mother was discharged in a good condition, but the babies are still under nursing care.

Case 6.

This patient, who was diagnosed to have twins, was admitted in the hospital on the 16th July. She had her physical examination and an X-Ray of the abdomen was taken. Two weeks after her admission, she was ready for her delivery. On the evening of August 2 at 8-30 without having any labor pains, the membranes began protruding from the vagina which frightened her greatly. She was taken to the delivery room as soon as possible. Within 30 minutes she delivered twin girls weighing 5 lbs. 8 oz., 5 lbs. 2 oz. respectively. These last twins, from all that can be seen are identical twins, that is, they are from a single ovum.

The importance of prenatal care needs to be emphasized more. It is so important that an expectant mother visit a reliable doctor or reliable nurse midwife as soon as she suspects pregnancy and then proper care may be given thus prolonging the mother's life as well as the babies'. Many of the tragedies of pregnancy could be prevented here in our country if only this were done.

