

From the Institute of Allergy, New York, USA.

POLLEN

A cause of symptoms other than the usual ones of hay fever or asthma

By

LOUIS STERNBERG, M.D.
New York

Seasonal hay fever and asthma or both are often seen in our country. Rarely do we find patients suffering from symptoms other than those mentioned during the pollen season. During the summer of 1957, three unusual cases, and each one with a different complaint, came for relief. They are presented because of their interest, and also on account of their rarity.

1.—N.G. This patient was a man thirty-six years old. He gave a history of having suffered of an extreme form of conjunctivitis during the spring and fall for about fourteen years. Never had any nose or chest complaints during that same period. He was treated by many eye men with drops and ointments. The last ophthalmologist gave him injections of an autogenous vaccine made from his discharge of the eyelids without any relief. He therefore referred the patient as a possible allergic case. He had no physical signs in his eyes at that time for it was before the pollen season. This patient gave no history nor did he have any physical signs of vernal catarh. However, he did give marked skin reactions to the grasses and weeds, and was treated with an extract from these pollens, with a perfect result during last and again this summer.

2.—B.H. This second patient was a woman fifty years old. She gave a history of coughing spells during the spring and early summer for many years. She was also treated by various physicians without relief. She had a son who was under my care for late hay fever, and on one occasion, she complained to me of her coughing spells. She had no nasal nor any eye symptoms, and no dyspnoea at any time. The seasonal character of her complaint was suspicious of some possible allergic factor. As her blood at that time also showed a 7 % eosinophilia count, she was skin tested and gave a marked reaction to the grasses. As it was late in the season, I suggested that she come in this year before the coughing

spells began. She did come in March and was given treatments with an extract of the mixed grasses. The result was excellent, and she claimed that her improvement was at least 90 % better than the years without any pollen injections.

3.—L.M. This third patient was one of late hay fever and urticaria at the same time. This man was forty-two years old and had suffered from his symptoms for about twelve years. In the beginning, it was the hay fever only, and then the urticaria added to his complaint. Both began in late August and both disappeared at the end of September. Skin tests with all the inhalents and foods were negative except a positive reaction to the ragweed. He refused injections with ragweed extract. Elimination of various seasonal and usual foods did not affect the urticaria at all, but he felt better again at the end of the hay-fever season.

CONCLUSION

It would be interesting to know whether these cases are more often seen in other parts of the world. These patients will be found, I am sure, in greater numbers if we will look for them.

At present, they make the rounds every summer from one physician to another without being recognized.

We must therefore interest the internist to be allergy conscious, so that he can manage these patients from an allergic angle.

Author's address:

15, Park Avenue, New York.
N. Y., U.S.A.

This document is a scanned copy of a printed document. No warranty is given about the accuracy of the copy. Users should refer to the original published version of the material.