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PREMATURE UNITS IN CAIRO

by

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An Infant is described as premature if his birth weight is less than 2500 grms - this is according to the international committee 1937

In Egypt, according to the University hospital statistics, about 8% of live births are premature babies.

Also the neo-natal death rate forms 21% of the infant mortality rate. The premature deaths form a big proportion of the neo-natal deaths because the premature infants are more subjected to certain complications at birth and to some diseases afterwards.

The chief causes of prematurity are believed to be pre-natal complications such as toxæmias, placenta praevia, diabetes, accidents and multiple pregnancy etc. Prematurity is higher in the lower income group and in the illegitimate.

As a measure against the high neo-natal mortality in the premature two Demonstration and Training Centres will be established in Cairo:

1. A premature centre will be established in the maternity section of the University hospital of Cairo where doctors and trained midwives will get training in the care of the premature. To this centre will be transferred the premature babies who have small weights i.e. weights below 2000 grms, or babies who are over 2000 grms in weight but who can not suck or swallow or need oxygen i.e. those who need special care.

2. A section will be established in the MCH Centre at Gyza. This will be a home care section for the training of doctors, trained qualified midwives and assistant midwives, on the home care of the heavier premature babies. This section will be divided into :
 - a. A premature baby training unit, in the Gyza MCH Centre, which consists of ten cubicles for ten premature babies and their mothers.
 - b. A service for nursing premature babies in their homes i.e. babies who are born at home attended by the assistant midwives, should be nursed at home if their birth weight is over 2000 grms and at the same time they can swallow and suck and do not need oxygen or any other special method of feeding.

The advantage of keeping the mother and baby at home is that the home care is more economical than the hospital care and also it gives great opportunity for the education of the family in the care of their own baby.

Babies weighing 2000 grms but under bad home conditions are transferred to the home unit in the MCH Centre.

In case the mother leaves the hospital she should be provided with every help which may be necessary and decided by the staff.

Mothers have to be educated in the care of their premature infants.

The doctor in charge of the mother decides the place for delivery and care of the baby.

One doctor and three qualified nurse midwives have been sent **abroad for training** in this field. As soon as this staff is back these units will start functioning.

Staffing of the home unit

Two doctors and three qualified nurse midwives all trained in this field, and also six assistant midwives will be responsible for the care of premature baby home units. Special assistant midwives will be provided for premature deliveries taking place at the home of the mothers.