

Calcium and Phosphorus Metabolism and its Associated Diseases. Recording by PROFESSOR C. E. DENT. The College Medical Recording Service and Sound Library.

Calcium metabolism is an extremely difficult subject to understand and Professor Dent must be congratulated on achieving an exceptionally lucid description with the aid of a simple diagram. He deals with the problems of absorption, excretion and distribution throughout the body. He also explains the important homeostatic mechanism which maintains equilibrium between the plasma calcium and the bone calcium and which preserves a remarkably constant level in the plasma in a wide variety of disease states. Phosphorus metabolism is simply explained and the structure of the calcium phosphate crystal that allows the incorporation of poisonous minerals, such as lead or radioactive strontium in its lattice.

The second part deals with a wide variety of calcium disorders which he groups under the headings of dietary, renal, plasma calcium and metabolic bone disorders. This embraces such a wide range of diseases that in the time allotted he has had to compress his subject with inevitable loss of clarity. He does deal, however, in some detail with the important subject of osteoporosis, a condition which is all too often not diagnosed unless the practitioner is looking out for it. His discussion on treatment is distinctly depressing but he seems to be in favour of treatment by sex hormones rather than the expensive anabolic drugs. He leaves open the wisdom or otherwise of administering calcium. He makes a point that there has as yet been no reputable clinical trial to determine the best therapy of this baffling, though common, condition.

Prostatectomy—Early or Late. Recording by MR HOWARD HANLEY. The College Medical Recording Service and Sound Library.

This talk is an eloquent plea for elective prostatectomy before acute retention of urine develops. Modern surgical and anaesthetic techniques by removing the risks of infection and haemorrhage have made prostatectomy a safe procedure if undertaken at the right time. The mortality increases over three times if operation is left until retention develops. Mr Howard Hanley discusses indications for operation, the type of operation employed, the pre-operative preparation, post-operative care and rehabilitation. The questions that the patient will ask his general practitioner before and after operation are considered, as is the treatment of complications that may supervene after the patient has returned home. The indications for and technique of, catheterization are considered; catheterization should never be undertaken for acute retention unless it is impossible to arrange the emergency admission of the patient to hospital. Mr Howard Hanley discusses all the facets of the subject which matter to the general practitioner and leaves out technical details of surgical procedures. His talk is a model of how the surgeon should explain his subject to general practitioners and it is hoped that it will have the effect of reducing the high proportion of cases that come to the surgeon in acute retention.