material in one case. We thank Mrs. Helga Thiede for preparing the histological sections, and Mr. Ray Boyd for assisting with the illustrations.

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Medical Memoranda

Retention of Intrauterine Contraceptive Device during and after Delivery

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The use of intrauterine contraceptives is becoming more widespread. It is not yet known how they function but if one should fail there is ample evidence to show that it is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the ensuing pregnancy. (*Lancet*, 1964).

Armstrong and Andreson (1959) reported the first case of a device retained *in utero* until the third stage of labour—a Gräfenberg ring which was passed embedded in the placenta. Before this Zakin *et al.* (1955) had described cases where the device was spontaneously extruded or had been removed during pregnancy without harming the foetus.

Radiograph showing pregnancy (arrowed) superimposed on loop.

Oppenheimer (1959) confirmed the absence of ill-effects on the foetus, as did Hall and Stone (1962), who included an ectopic pregnancy in their series. Kwee (1964) reported two cases where a plastic loop was expelled at delivery: the one where the first of twins was a fresh stillbirth and the other

encountered in a molar pregnancy. He does not attribute either of these events to the loop.

There is as yet, it seems, no report in a British journal of a device being retained *in utero* after delivery and requiring removal several months later.

CASE REPORT

A married woman, aged 26 and with four children, disliked the side-effects of oral contraception and was fitted with a Lippes loop in December 1962. Initially this was very satisfactory; she was quite unaware of its presence and her menstrual and marital life were normal.

In May 1963 an acute attack of lower abdominal pain was diagnosed as a pelvic infection and treated with antibiotics, though the patient suspected that she was pregnant. Three months later a radiograph showed a pregnancy superimposed on the loop (see Fig.) and in January 1964 she had a spontaneous vertex delivery of a female infant weighing 7 lb. 5½ oz. (3.3 kg.). The baby appeared normal in all respects and has since thrived.

The loop could not be found in the placenta or membranes, and a radiograph taken four days after delivery showed it to be still *in utero*. In June 1964 she was seen at the gynaecological clinic. Pelvic examination revealed no abnormality apart from slight tenderness on mobilizing the uterus. There was no tubal filling on hystrogram but the loop was easily seen. It was finally removed under anaesthesia in July 1964, six months after delivery. Endometrial curettings taken at the same time showed normal proliferative endometrium. The following day there was no pain on pelvic examination and the patient was sent home. When seen at the follow-up clinic she was using oral contraceptives and appeared well.

COMMENT

This case confirms previous reports that retention of an intrauterine contraceptive device is unlikely adversely to affect a pregnancy. It also demonstrates that should it not be passed at delivery it may be left *in utero* for a considerable time without causing any local or general reaction.

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