

Brucellosis and The Royal Army Medical Corps

As it was owing to the perseverance and acumen of an RAMC officer that the real cause of the fever was first discovered, and as it is also due to the work of the former Professor and Assistant Professor of Pathology at Netley, that we possess the method of serum diagnosis, Mediterranean fever may be considered in a great degree as the special property of our Corps.

Major S Glenn Allen *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps* 1904; 2: 703

Clinical



1859 – Assistant Surgeon
Jeffrey Allen Marston
'Report on Fever (Malta)'

"The patient is prone to relapses, and the disorder is followed by a protracted convalescence – very frequently also by rheumatism of some form or other"

Aetiology



1887 – Surgeon
Captain David Bruce
'Note on the discovery of
a micro-organism in
Malta fever' *The
Practitioner*, 1887

'On placing the slide under a magnifying power of 300 diameters, the field of the microscope was literally crowded with myriads of micrococci dancing about in the most active manner'

Diagnosis



1897 – Almroth Wright,
Professor of Pathology,
Army Medical School
'On the application of
the serum test to the
differential diagnosis of
typhoid and Malta
fever' *The Lancet*, 1897

'By this method the blood of a patient who is suffering or who has suffered from a continued fever ... pathogenic micro-organism that may be available and in particular with the micro-organism which is usually associated with typhoid fever and Malta fever '

Prophylaxis, even

1897 – Professor Almroth Wright
and
Surgeon Major D Semple

'Comparative experiments on monkeys inoculated with dead and living cultures of Malta Fever have led us to believe that dead cultures in suitable doses give quite as effectual an immunity as living cultures'

History



Colonel E E Vella
'Brucellosis (The Corps
Disease)' *Journal of the
Royal Army Medical
Corps*, 1983; 129: 97-100



1879 – Surgeon
Major H Veale, Assistant
Professor of Military
Medicine
'Report on the cases of fever
from Cyprus, Malta and
Gibraltar'

'Is it a specific disease? That it is not enteric fever appears certain, that it is not malarial fever seems proved by its absolute resistance to quinine, that it is not relapsing fever may be concluded from the fact that no spirilla has been found in the blood, and that it is not dengue...'



1897 – Surgeon
Captain Matthew Louis
Hughes
'Mediterranean, Malta or
Undulant Fever'

'An endemic pyrexial disease, having a long and indefinite duration, an irregular course and an almost invariable tendency to undulatory pyrexial relapses, characterised by constipation, perspirations, neuralgia, accompanied by swelling, effusion of the joints and other rheumatoid symptoms...'



Major William Heaton
Horrocks



Captain James Crawford
Kennedy

Epidemiology

1905 – Major William Heaton Horrocks & Captain James Crawford Kennedy
'Mediterranean Fever Commission Reports'

'On July 18th 1905 the chairman received preliminary notes showing
(a) One or more apparently healthy goats in every herd was excreting *Micrococcus melitensis* in their milk and urine.
(b) 50% of goats in Malta react to Mediterranean Fever when examined by the serum agglutination test.



Surgeon
Major D Semple,
Assistant Professor of
Pathology. 'On the
employment of dead
bacteria in the serum
diagnosis of typhoid
and Malta fever'
BMJ, 1897

'The utility of the method of serum diagnosis of typhoid and Malta fever has now been so firmly established, and the technique of the method is now so simple, that this method of diagnosis will probably be everywhere employed by clinicians'



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