References


Discussion: Fat embolism

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Dr A. J. Watson has commented on the presence of petechial haemorrhages in the white matter of the brain in systemic fat embolism. His description seems to be accepted by most pathologists as typical of the naked-eye appearances in such cases. An example recently encountered in the Institute appears therefore to be of particular interest. This was a 33-year old woman who died of fulminating systemic fat embolism 29 hours after a road traffic accident in which one femur was fractured. At necropsy the brain was pale and rather swollen but, on section, there were no apparent focal naked-eye abnormalities in either the gray or white matter. The examination of large colloid sections, however, disclosed innumerable foci of neuronal necrosis which, although predominant in the cerebral and cerebellar cortex, were also present in the basal ganglia and white matter (Fig.). I would like to know how unusual the distribution of the pathological changes in this case is and whether lesions in the gray matter, if they have not been associated with petechiae, have been insufficiently recognized in the past.