Cineradiography of the Symptomatic Oesophagus

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The oesophagus may be efficiently examined by radiocinemato-graphy, whereas fluoroscopy is unreliable; radiographic selection is uncertain, necessitates repeated exposure, and is expensive; and slowing agents (position, contraction modifications, special opaque substances) alter the normal physiology.

The author has examined by cineradiography about fifty pathological, but non-malignant, conditions of the oesophagus—diverticula (solitary or multiple) of the thoracic segment; “functional” dysphagia or conditions considered as such; cardiospasm; benign stenosis; and oesophago-bronchial fistulae (fig. 1).

Fig. 1. The plate is a contact print from a continuous radiociné 35 mm. film at a speed of 16 exposures per second. The series begins with the top left hand figure, and ends at the bottom right hand corner with the 24th figure. It demonstrates the great value of radiocinematography in the study of the physiology of the oesophagus in both health and disease, and draws attention to the quality of serial pictures which the camera makes possible. At first our studies were confined to movement only, but now they embrace continuous series representing all phases of the rapid physiological cycle. Each negative image is studied with a magnifying glass or in a viewing box.

In the present series, the oesophagus bears two diverticula, and the motility at the level of their necks is well shown.