

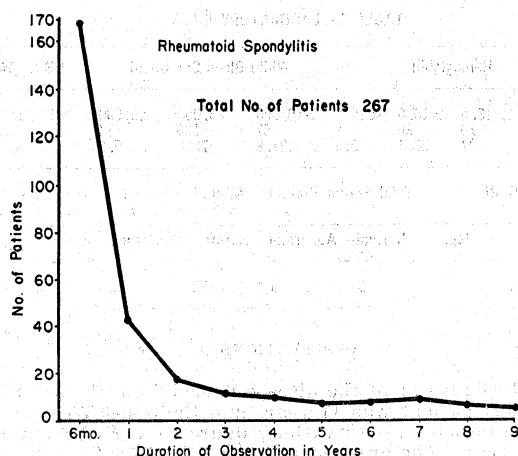


FIG. 2.

TABLE 3.—AGE AT ONSET AND DURATION OF OBSERVATION

Age at onset	Number of patients	Duration of observation	Number of patients
Less than 20.....	71	Less than 6 months.....	168
21 to 30.....	152	More than 1 year.....	41
31 to 40.....	37	More than 2 years.....	17
41 to 50.....	6	More than 3 years.....	11
51 to 60.....	1	More than 4 years.....	10
		More than 5 years.....	4
		More than 6 years.....	5
		More than 7 years.....	6
		More than 8 years.....	2
		More than 9 years.....	3
Total number of patients.....	267		267

MODE OF ONSET

The onset of the disease in the majority of the patients was insidious, generally over a period of several months or even years, and progression of the disease was interrupted by pain-free periods lasting several weeks or months. With each relapse, however, the symptoms were generally more severe and the duration of each episode was longer; ultimately the symptoms became more or less constant. Thus, there was a gradual increase in the severity of the patient's complaints. In a small number of patients the course of the disease was progressive and developed fairly rapidly, although they continued to have periods of exacerbations and remissions. The most common symptoms at the onset of the disease were stiffness and aching in the low back in the morning on awakening which would persist for half an hour or longer. With activity, the back would "limber up" and the aching and stiffness would gradually disappear toward the late forenoon, only to return toward the end of the day or during the night while the patient was lying in bed, awakening him. The severity of the backache varied considerably in different patients. Characteristically, it awakened the patient two or three hours after falling asleep. The patient would then get off the bed and walk about for one-half hour or longer to obtain relief; then he would return to bed, only to be awakened again in two or three hours, to repeat the process of walking to obtain relief. Patients whose disease was more severe repeated this process two to three times nightly, so that their rest and sleep were markedly disturbed and, as a result, their general well-being suffered, their appetites became poor, and they lost weight. In some patients numbness of the lower extremities accompanied the aching and stiffness in the low back, and they "had to rub" their lower extremities to obtain relief.