

19th March 2014 Tea from 4pm Seminar starts 4.30pm

Probing deeper into a chart: astrology, narrative, and the role of observation in early modern collections of genitures

Dr Monica Azzolini University of Edinburgh

Consilia and *observationes* are two medical genres that emphasised the individual patient. Narrative and *historia* are two aspects of these medical genres. Astrological horoscopes also have a clear narrative and are focused on the individual. Ptolemy argued that astrology was like medicine: conjectural and dependent on both variables and the individual. This paper argues that the increasing importance of observation in 16th-century medicine has a parallel in the rising popularity of the geniture collection (i.e. collection of natal charts). Through the study of a series of horoscopes this paper strives to highlight similarities and differences between the methods of the physician and those of the astrologer in 16th-century Europe.

16th April 2014 Tea from 4pm Seminar starts 4.30pm

The European birth of epidemiology

Professor Alfredo Morabia City University New York/Columbia University

Epidemiology emerged in the 17th century as a result of a profound revolution of ideas in philosophy and science. The revolution is often viewed as taking root in England before growing internationally. However, a closer look at the intellectual foundations of epidemiology shows that scientists and philosophers originating from or working in England, France, and the Netherlands agitated the revolutionary ideas simultaneously and synergistically. Without this intellectual synergy, the leverage to overthrow the antique holistic and metaphysical tradition would not have been reached so rapidly or effectively.

The Edinburgh History of Medicine Group allows those interested in social and medical history to enjoy some talks and to interact with medical practitioners and medical historians at the **Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh**. This is our 16th year and we invite you to come along to the College at **9 Queen Street** for the meetings, which are promoted jointly by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and the University of Edinburgh.

Admission to the seminars is free. Further information is available from—

I.Milne@rcpe.ac.uk Gayle.Davis@ed.ac.uk

To view webcasts of previous EHMG seminars and other Sibbald Library medical history activities visit <http://www.rcpe.ac.uk/library-archives/watch>

**Royal College of
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EDINBURGH HISTORY OF MEDICINE GROUP SEMINARS 2013-14



9th October 2013 Tea from 4pm Seminar starts 4.30pm

Food allergy Before “allergy”

Dr Matthew Smith University of Strathclyde

How were bizarre reactions to food described before the coining of the term ‘*allergy*’ in 1906? Symptoms reminiscent of food allergy have been observed since Ancient Greece and Rome, with Lucretius stating that one person’s food could be another’s poison. Many physicians were convinced that reactions to food were responsible for symptoms ranging from asthma to migraine. At the root of debates about food allergy were questions about the value of patient testimony and the difficulty in proving the link between food and chronic reactions, issues that remain to this day.

16th October 2013 5pm *with* University of Edinburgh Irish History seminar series, Room G.13, William Robertson Wing, Old Medical School, Teviot Place

Gender, power and body mass in late-19th century Irish prisons

Dr Ciara Breathnach University of Limerick

This paper highlights the prison infirmary as a site of arbitration, resistance and ‘*contested power*’. Periods of incarceration in prisons were bookended by medical examinations: the initial test was to ascertain the prisoner’s ability to conduct hard labour, while the final test was used for future identification purposes. It would be reasonable to assume that the balance of power was weighted in the authority’s favour, but there is evidence to the contrary. Using the Body Mass Index (BMI) as an instrument to measure physical wellbeing, this analysis of 251 convict medical records shows that the balance of diet and work led to what might be a counterintuitive outcome: a preponderance of weight gain, particularly for males in Irish prisons.

6th November 2013 Douglas Guthrie History of Medicine Lecture 4.15pm

Scotland’s discoverer of insulin: JJR Macleod

Professor Michael Bliss University Professor Emeritus University of Toronto

James J.R. Macleod was co-discoverer of insulin and the co-holder with Frederick Banting of the 1923 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Macleod’s contributions to the research at the University of Toronto that produced that epochal discovery are now fairly well understood. Unfortunately Macleod’s role was obscured after his death because of the intense personal acrimony directed at him by Banting, and then by a campaign of self-aggrandizement carried out by Banting’s assistant, Charles Best. Since the publication of *The Discovery of Insulin* in 1982, Macleod’s rehabilitation in historical and popular circles has gradually taken place and new evidence reinforces our understanding of why he was wronged by his collaborators.

27th November 2013 Tea from 4pm Seminar starts 4.30pm

The history of forensic anthropology - perhaps it is really forensic anatomy

Professor Sue Black University of Dundee

Forensic anthropology has a relatively long history in the USA but is a more recent addition in the UK. However, just a shallow scratch below the surface of this modern discipline shows that it is firmly rooted within human anatomy. This talk will chart the history of forensic anthropology in the UK and illustrate its constant links back to so many aspects of applied anatomy that we might be forgiven for thinking that it has been incorrectly named.

Thursday 5th December 2013 Centre for Population Health Sciences 3rd

Centenary of Public Health in Edinburgh Lecture, Tea at 4.30pm Talk at 5.15pm

Evidence and action: The legacy of John Snow. Views from the literature of Scotland on the potential for health.

Professor Sir Kenneth Calman University of Glasgow

John Snow demonstrated a key characteristic of the doctor - the linking of the collection of evidence and the need to take decisive action. To consider this aspect further, the literature of Scotland will be reviewed to show that although the determinants of health (lifestyle, social factors, the environment, the provision of a health service and biological factors) have been identified they have, in many instances, not been acted upon by individuals or communities. The knowledge is available but the potential for health not realised.

29th January 2014 Tea from 4pm Seminar starts 4.30pm

William Orpen: looking at bodies in medicine and art

Dr Keren Hammerschlag Georgetown University

William Orpen (1878-1931) produced numerous pictures of doctors and artists. Orpen suggests that in medical diagnostics, as in the production and evaluation of artworks, specialised visual skills are required. In his painting *A Mere Fracture* (1901), which depicts a doctor examining a leg for a fracture, Orpen showed the close observation of surface detail and the knowledge of anatomy that he believed was required of artists. At the same time, in this painting and others like it, the artist included visual illusions and distorted mirror reflections, which cast doubt over the reliability of vision.

19th February 2014 Tea from 4pm Seminar starts 4.30pm

“Minds the dead have ravaged”: How ideas about psychiatric trauma evolved in the two World Wars’

Professor Edgar Jones King’s College London

The two World Wars intensified the study of the psychological effects of combat for both soldiers and civilians. This talk explores how health-care professionals in the UK interpreted psychosomatic disorders such as shell shock, battle exhaustion and traumatic neurasthenia, in the context of psychiatric research and the new forms of warfare. Civilians and emergency workers were exposed to extreme stress during air-raids forcing doctors to weigh up the causal contribution of personality versus traumatic events.

5th March 2014 Tea from 4pm Seminar starts 4.30pm

Mithridates he died old: Some tests of universal remedies for poison in the 16th century.

Professor Iain Donaldson Hon. Lib. RCPE; Emeritus Prof. University of Edinburgh

In renaissance Europe the great feared poisoning - as they had since antiquity - and relied on universal remedies against all poisons. A discussion of some contemporary tests of the efficacy of such remedies will lead us to consider, among other recondite matters, the effectiveness of the breasts of virgins in catching unicorns, the use of a thousand live scorpions in concocting a universal balm, the ‘*cruelty*’ of Napellus (Monkshood), whether an accretion from goats’ stomachs can antagonize corrosive sublimate and the public relations problems of royal doctors.