

18th Annual History of Medicine Days

Konferenz veranstaltet von der Faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta, 6. bis 7. März 2009

The History of Medicine Days are an annual two-day nationwide conference held at the University of Calgary, in which undergraduate and early postgraduate students from across Canada give 10-minute presentations on the history of medicine and health care. This year, there were 42 panel presentations and 15 poster presentations. The session themes of the 2009 conference were Classics, Canadiana, Eugenics, Military Medicine, Public Health, Surgery, Diseases, Sex and Gender, and Media and Public Perception of Medicine. It is assumed and required that every presentation or poster provides some original research attempt, new methodological perspective on a topic, and/or visibly critical discussion following from each presenter's engagement with his or her topic. The conference consisted of ten panels and one keynote lecture and started following the welcome addresses by the conference chair, Dr. Frank W. Stahnisch; the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Thomas Feasby; and the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Kevin McQuillan.

In the First Session, titled „Classics“, *Nicole Wilson* from the Department of Greek and Roman Studies (UofC) presented on how artistic expressions of pain and suffering became increasingly prominent in ancient Rome, in the same period that the theorizing of pain by ancient physicians increased. *Lesley Bolton*, from the same Department, talked about the adage, „It's not what you say, but how you say it“, reflecting on the greater recognition of Soranus' second-century BCE work on gynaecology in comparison with Muscio's „Gynaecia“. Also alluding to the visual presentation of the two standard works, she attributed this to a difference in the choice of topic, method of presentation, and intended audience that made the „Gynaecia“ more accessible. *Gordon Tsang*, from the Faculty of Medicine (UWO), explained that, although it is recognized that sports medicine in Ancient Greece and Rome played a large role in the beginning of Western Medicine, it is less commonly acknowledged that Roman gladiatorial contests were designed to provide bloodshed predominantly as a public attraction. Medical practitioners (especially surgeons) actively sought to foster this end. *Adam Fowler*, College of Medicine (UofS) talked about how Greek medical ideas were used by Christians and Muslims during the era of the Crusades, and how the liberal religious attitude of the Muslim world helped to foster the exchange of medical concepts and practices.

The Second Session, named „Canadiana“, saw *Bradley Ball* from the Faculty of Medicine (Dalhousie) highlighting Sir Wilfred Grenfell (1865-1940) as Canada's first Holistic practitioner. *Anna Davies*, Faculty of Medicine (Memorial), presented on delivering healthcare to the Labrador Inuit over the past 250 years. *Caitlin Symonette*, Faculty of Medicine (UWO), talked about Maude Abbott (1869-1940), a collaborator of McGill's Sir William Osler (1849-1919) and a central founding figure in the women's movement in medical education. *Meiqi Guo*, from the Queens School of Medicine and winner of the best oral presentation award, talked about Canadian physicians as members of parliament, submitting new and astonishing data on the overall trend of decreasing physician engagement in federal elections and their involvement in ministerial and other major political leadership roles.

Session Three covered the topic of „Eugenics“, wherein *Melissa Crawford & Carla Dubois* from the School of Medicine (University of Northern Ontario) talked about the role of medicine in the Alberta Sexual Steriliza-

tion Act (1927), highlighting the support for this act by many members of the medical field. *Karolina Kowalewski*, O'Brian Center (UofC), looked at the eugenics movement in Saskatchewan, and her colleague, *Yasmin Mayne*, talked about the eugenics movement in Alberta from a comparative perspective. They co-presented their findings and hypothesized that, although discussions between Premier Tommy Douglas (1904-1986) and specialist expert and medical historian Henry Sigerist (1891-1957) had emphasized eugenic measures in Saskatchewan since the 1930s, it was to a large extent through the grassroots movement of the United Farmers Association and the Farming Women that a eugenics program was developed in the neighbouring province of Alberta.

In this year's keynote lecture, distinguished historian of biology *Garland E. Allen* from Washington University in Saint Louis (USA), spoke on „Evolution, Genetics and Eugenics: The Misuse of Biological Theory, 1900-1945“, a comprehensive overview on the topic based on his 25 years of research. Allen pointed out that although the movement was an international one, it was in the United States, Sweden and Germany where eugenicists achieved their most notable social programs. When increasingly inhumane practices arose in Germany after the rise of the Nazi state, American states backed off from their more drastic policies, yet eugenic thought in many political policies, medical concepts, and ideological views prevailed. Dr. Allen, by drawing a subtle symmetric argument in the latter part of his talk, pointed out that a new eugenics could emerge today in what has been called „the century of the gene“.

Sessions Four and Five were about „Military Medicine“ *Steven Marti*, Department of History (UofC), looked at the treatment of shell shock in British soldiers in World War I from the angle of public advocacy on the matter. He assessed the effectiveness of treatment methods for shell shock by considering the actions implemented by the British military medical services and compared them to the alternatives that were advocated by civilian physicians. *Sebastian Vuong*, from the Humanities Program of the Faculty of Medicine (Dalhousie), presented on trauma care in WWI and talked about historical developments, using Second Lieutenant Revere Edward Osler (1895-1917), son of the renowned physician, Sir William Osler, as an example. *Brydon Blacklaws*, from the same program, explored the obvious enthusiasm of Canadian medical students to join the British Army in WWI. From a very innovative perspective, *Mary England* (Dalhousie) showed how policies and attitudes toward venereal disease control in World War I were prompted by the exchanges of soldiers and the development of a new morale. Her argument rested on a comparison of policy differences in Canada, the UK and the USA. *David Goodick* (Dalhousie) talked about the origins of modern trauma care from World War I to Vietnam, stating that military medicine developed new and innovative methods of saving life and limb and that war influenced the development of an organized, regional structure of trauma care in civilian life. He emphasized these contributions by comparing changes in traumatological decision chains throughout the 20th century. *Mark Macdonald* (Memorial) presented a dense paper on the development of prosthetic legs, from the Civil War-era wooden legs to today's C-Leg prosthesis. For his work, he won the Dr. Bill Whitelaw Award in the category of Best Paper on the History of Medicine.

Session Six was about „Public Health“. *Sean Doherty*, Faculty of Medicine (Memorial), covered the medicalization of behaviour, by exploring the socially-constructed diseases drapetomania and masturbation. He submitted that medicine is perennially subject to external forces and it categorizes conditions whose legitimacy as diseases is highly controversial even today. *Matt McGeachy*, Department of History (UofT) presented new research on the 1960s anti-psychiatric movement in Toronto. His talk was titled „Therafields: Toronto's (Nearly) Forgotten Psychotherapeutic Community“, which he had analyzed by studying oral history, pamphlets and psychiatric literature from the second part of the last century. *Chelsey Ricketts*, Faculty of Medicine (Dalhousie), examined Cuba's Healthcare Revolution over the last 50 years, which, according to her research, greatly increased the quality of care available to Cubans over time. Through emphasizing disease prevention, it became first-class in many areas without the high expenses (as a percentage of GDP) of many

Western medical systems. *Julia Cameron-Vendrig*, Queens School of Medicine, talked about the „School Health Programs in New York City, 1860-1925“, which increased rapidly during that period, showing how social medicine and feminism influenced the metropolitan health problems of the Industrial Age. European delegate *Niklaus Ingold*, from the „Forschungsstelle für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte“ of the University of Zurich (Switzerland), presented an innovative „History about Electric Devices for the Irradiation of the Human Body, 1890-1960“, and, from a historical and philosophical perspective, raised the questions: How did perceptions of the causes of diseases and the effects of light irradiations on the human body influence the use of sunlamps, and how was the distribution of the irradiation-devices connected to the formation of the ideal of a slim, tanned, exercised body? Finally *Charlene Ronquillo*, School of Nursing (UBC), looked at the de-institutionalization of mental health care in British Columbia by examining the changing role and architecture of the massive Riverview Hospital between 1950 and 2000, covering the political, social, financial, and cultural factors influencing its downsizing in favour of community-based mental healthcare.

Session Seven covered the topic of „Surgery“. *Lina Roa*, from the U of C History Department, addressed the influence of Aristotle's natural philosophy on William Harvey's (1578-1657) medical discoveries, such as the nature of the pulse, the heart and the circulation of the blood in the body. She submitted that Harvey's use of Aristotle's notions of material, formal, efficient and final causes in a tight interplay with the surgical procedures of the Early Modern Period, had a strong impact on Harvey's medical discoveries. *Anne De Silva*, Faculty of Medicine (Dalhousie), investigated the evolution of the plastic surgeon from a temporary player in trauma medicine to a respected member of an established medical specialty. The presentation ranged from 600 BC, when, the author submitted, „reconstructive techniques were shrouded in secrecy, tweaked and tailored“, to WWI and WWII, where plastic surgery played an important and open role. *Chantelle Champagne*, Faculty of Medicine (UofA), covered cyanoacrylates as haemostatic aids in the Vietnam War, including their path to discovery beforehand and their use after the Vietnam War. By drawing on pharmaceutical catalogues and medical literature, she was able to characterize a meandering course of accident, acceptance, and rejection of plastic glue in surgery, culminating in its partial approval for medical use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 1998. This breathtaking and innovative approach won her the Dr. Peter Cruse Award for the Best Paper in the History of Surgery. *Kate Elzinga*, from the Faculty of Medicine (UofC), looked at important medical milestones leading up to the first human heart transplant, and *Donald Graham*, from the same institution, gave a brief history of epilepsy surgery, focusing on the important contributions of Theodore Rasmussen (1910-2002), the American-born Canadian neurosurgeon and director of the Montreal Neurological Institute between 1960 and 1972, following Wilder Penfield (1891-1976).

Session Eight covered „Diseases“. *Mollie Ferris*, Faculty of Medicine (UofC) explored the history of appendicitis from the Italian physician Berengario Da Carpi (ca. 1470-ca. 1530), who first described the anatomic Appendix vermiformis in 1521, to Joseph Lister's (1827-1912) articles on antisepsis, with which surgical treatment evolved. *Genevieve Dudar*, Faculty of Medicine (UofC) covered the origin of syphilis, asking whether it was an Old- or New-World disease, and presenting evidence of archaeological bone specimens that indicate that it is probably both. *Seirin Goldade*, Faculty of Medicine (UofC), explored the development of the smallpox vaccine in the light of the early anti-vaccination movement in Canada and highlighted that the safety, efficacy, and necessity of universal and/or compulsory vaccination have been challenged since the very first days of vaccination in Canada.

Session Nine was on „Sex and Gender“. *Stefanie van der Gracht*, from the Department of Greek and Roman Studies (UofC), in a very well received talk, covered hermaphroditism in Ancient Medicine. She presented the topic as a neglected area in the study of the history of medicine, especially in ancient Greek and Roman medical history. Van der Gracht submitted that (a) many ancient Greeks and Romans were well aware of the condition through the hermaphrodite god that figured in the pantheon of their religion; (b) the popularity of

the hermaphrodite as subject of both paintings and sculptural artworks – particularly during the Roman Empire – is a testament to the prominence of this figure within ancient society; and (c) there is ample evidence from ancient Greek and Latin sources to indicate that the condition of hermaphroditism was understood to exist in a medical context of diagnosis, but there were no treatment recommendations. *Nik Straub*, from the Department of Philosophy (Guelph), talked about the shifting attitudes towards treating nymphomania in the 18th and 19th centuries, from the humoral treatment to a gynaecological framework, which stressed that nymphomania was located in the sexual parts, and theorized that the removal of them would cure the female patient especially. Psychiatrists postulated that the seat of nymphomania lay in the brain, and thus female patients should not be exposed to radical surgical intervention, giving rise to a heated debate particularly within the English-speaking medical community. *Rebecca Coish*, Faculty of Medicine (Manitoba), talked about Mary Speechly (1896-1990) and the Formation of the Winnipeg Birth Control Society. Mary Speechly, according to the presenter, was instrumental in the revocation of section 150 of the Criminal Code of Canada, which had prohibited the provision of birth control advice to women since the 1930s. *Kat Williams*, from the Department of Social Studies of Medicine (McGill), covered the controversial rejuvenation experiments by Dr. Leo Stanley (1886-1976) at the Californian San Quentin Prison between 1913 and 1951. In her fine and detailed analysis, she showed how the confines of the prison, the captive situation of its inmates, and the lack of ethical restrictions made the operations on hundreds of inmates possible, adding another case study to the history of human medical experimentation in the pre-Tuskegee United States. *Fiona Aiston*, Faculty of Medicine (Queens) talked about the history of sexual addiction over the last 200 years; *Akshay Shetty*, Faculty of Medicine (UWO), outlined the history of anaesthesia in obstetrics, starting in 1847, and early controversies in its acceptance. He particularly delved into the opposition of the Christian church, which advocated retaining the sensation of pain, either as a diagnostic tool or as a necessary part of labour, that sparked a 15-year debate, eventually leading to changed contemporary views about pain in childbirth and gynaecology.

The last Session covered the „Media and Public Perception of Medicine“. *Daniel Sheps*, Faculty of Medicine (UofM) examined the ethical dilemma of using Nazi medical data. He highlighted two physicians, Dr. Pozos of the University of Minnesota and Dr. Hayward of the University of Victoria, who weighed the merit of utilizing Nazi experimental data against the violation of human rights. This described how an uneasy decision was made to utilize this knowledge, regardless of how atrocious its development had been, by evoking future benefit through „saving lives“ in medicine. *Valerie Brulé*, Faculty of Medicine (UofC), talked about the role of the media in shaping public views on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and submitted that the influence of the media is one catalyst for the controversy and confusion that still pervades the diagnosis and description of the condition. Her attractive communication style, emphasizing selective attention and manipulation of ADHD awareness, won her the Award for Best Conference Presentation in the A/V Category. The final talk of the conference was given by *Allison Geddes*, Faculty of Medicine (Dalhousie) and medical journalist, who covered the evolution of television medical dramas. She submitted that „early portrayals of medical doctors were simplistic, heroic sketches that played off traditional patient-doctor relationships of the time“. After WWII, the idolized doctor was deconstructed and medical realism was introduced in widespread programs such as „Emergency!“ and „M A S H“. A physician's dedication was now coupled with the advanced medical sciences, as when the renowned American Medical Association financially supported and critically supervised the production of TV hospital series. Following Geddes' analysis, (a) audiences of programs such as ER were no longer interested in the art of medicine and demanded evidence-based practice and technical accuracy, and (b) characters portrayed in television medical dramas came to reflect public opinions and expectations which were carried into clinics, hospitals and medical schools today.

The range and variety of the papers presented was an indication of the variety of subthemes of the rich history of medicine. It likewise reflected the potential for good early research and scholarship in undergraduate and

postgraduate students, who through innovative approaches, interesting case examples, and often highly intriguing case studies, enriched ongoing discussions in medical historiography. In the ensuing discussions, which also saw the contributions of six professional North American historians of medicine and sciences, the individual projects were linked to the discourses, methodological pathways, and future prospects of an interdisciplinary, active, and plurimethodological scholarship in the history of medicine and health care. While many of the presentations gave information that is even applicable to today's medical topics and challenges, the individual professional chairs related the outcome to the historical debates as well as to intriguing modern medical controversies and developments.

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Conference Overview

Session 1 – „CLASSICS“ Chair: Prof. Peter Toohey (Greek and Roman studies, UofC)

Make 'em laugh: pain and suffering as entertainment in ancient Rome – Nicole Wilson

It's not what you say, but how you say it: Soranus and Muscio – Lesley Bolton

Gladiators: how bloodshed gave rise to Western Medicine – Gordon Tsang

A great sense of humour: Greek medical ideas and crusade-era enemies – Adam Fowler

Session 2 – „CANADIANA“ Chair: Dr. Gil Kaplan (Gastroenterology, UofC)

More than pills and potions: Sir Wilfred Grenfell – Canada's first holistic practitioner – Bradley Ball

Jesus, germs and dogsled doctors – delivering healthcare to the Labrador Inuit – Anna Davies

Dr. Maude Abbott – Caitlin Symonette

The Doctor is in the House (of Commons): an Exploration of Canadian Physicians as Members of Parliament – Meiqi Guo

Session 3 – „EUGENICS“ Chair: Dr. Gregor Wolbring (Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies, UofC)

The role of medicine in the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act – Melissa Crawford & Carla Dubois

Mapping public mental health in Alberta: The eugenics movement – Yasmin Mayne

Mapping public mental health in Saskatchewan: The eugenics movement – Karolina Kowalewski

„Keynote Lecture & Discussion“ Chair: Dr. Frank W. Stahnisch (History of Medicine, UofC)

„Evolution, Genetics and Eugenics: The Misuse of Biological Theory, 1900-1945. Lessons from the Past“
Prof. Garland E. Allen, Washington University in St. Louis (USA)

SESSION 4/5 – „MILITARY MEDICINE“ Chair: Prof. Alexander Hill (Center for Military and Strategic Studies, UofC)

It's draining men: public opinion, military necessity and the British response to shell shock during the First World War – Steven Marti

Fallen soldier 1917: the wounding and death of Revere Edward Osler then and now – Sebastian Voung

„Do your bit!“ The role of medical students in WWI – Bryden Blacklaws

Taboos in the time of war: policies and attitudes toward venereal disease control in World War I – Mary England

An ill wind blowing good: origins of modern trauma care from World War I to Vietnam – David Goodick

Medicine marches on: war and the development of prosthetic legs – Mark MacDonald

Session 6 – „PUBLIC HEALTH“ Dr. Ardene Vollman (Public Health, UofC)

Forgotten Diseases: A brief history of social construction in medicine – Sean Doherty

Therafields: Toronto's (nearly) forgotten psychotherapeutic community– Matt McGeachy

50 years on: Cuba's healthcare revolution – Chelsey Ricketts

School health programs in New York City, 1860-1925: the child hygiene movement– Julia Cameron-Vendrig

Daily „light showers“ in the bathroom: a history about electric devices for the irradiation of the human body, 1890-1960 – Niklaus Ingold

Deinstitutionalization of mental health care in British Columbia: a critical examination of the role of Riverview Hospital from 1950-2000 – Charlene Ronquillo

Session 7 – „SURGERY“ Chair: Dr. Keith Todd (Haematology, UofC)

The influence of Aristotle's Philosophy on Harvey's Medical Discoveries – Lina Roa

Reconstructing the past: the evolution of the plastic surgeon – Anne Da Silva

Plastics and politics: how armed conflicts have changed the face of cosmetic surgery – Erin Kwolek

Serendipity, super glue and surgery: cyanoacrylates as hemostatic aids in the Vietnam War – Chantelle Champagne

The history of epilepsy surgery and Theodore Rasmussen's surgical technique – Don Graham

Important medical milestones leading up to the first human heart transplantation – Kate Elzinga

Session 8 – „DISEASES“ Chair: Dr. Ian Mitchell (Paediatrics, UofC)

History of appendicitis – Mollie Ferris

The origin of syphilis: is the „great pox“ an old world or new world disease? – Genevieve Dudar

A „Tyranny of Doctorcraft?": the smallpox vaccine and early anti-vaccination movement in Canada – Seirin Goldade

Session 9 – „SEX AND GENDER“ Chair: Dr. Wilfreda Thurston (Gender Medicine, UofC)

Setting aside the loom: hermaphroditism in ancient medicine – Stephanie Van Der Gracht

The shifting attitudes towards treating nymphomania in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – Nick Straub

Mary Speechly & the formation of the Winnipeg Birth Control Society: easing the plight of young families in spite of the Criminal Code Uses and Abuses of Animals in Medicine – Rebecca Coish

Troublemakers and testicles: Dr. Leo Stanley's rejuvenation experiments at San Quentin Prison, 1913-1951 – Kat Williams

Sexual addiction: an old affliction returning to the spotlight – Fiona Aiston

No pain, no gain: the history of anaesthesia in obstetrics – Akshay Shetty

Session 10 – „MEDIA AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF MEDICINE“ Chair: Prof. Sasha Mullally (History of Medicine, UofA)

Rising from the ashes: the ethical dilemma of using Nazi medical data in modern times – Daniel Sheps

Can you pay attention to this? The role of the media in shaping public views on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder – Valérie Brulé

Is there a doctor in House? The evolution of doctors in TV land – Allison Geddes

Poster Session I Chair: Dr. Keith Sharkey (Hotchkiss Brain Institute, UofC)

The evolution of cataract surgery procedures – Anastasia Aristarkhova (UofC)

A history of hope: tracing the role of hope in medicine – Lisa Freeman (UofM)

Farewell to Nova Scotia: the life and times of Dr. Thomas McCully Creighton – Luke Harnish (Dal)

From Röntgen Rays to early radiology: over a century of Canadian contributions to an expanding specialty – Bret Landry (Dal)

The white coat ceremony: a new tradition – Steven Choy (UWO)

The microbial history and evolution of Type II necrotizing fasciitis from infection exclusively by *Streptococcus pyogenes* to include Monomicrobial methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* – Meghan Garnett (Northern)

Simple as ABC: Peter Safar, Father of CPR – Yves Leroux (Dal)

Histories of physical medicine and rehabilitation: differing emphases in sociological and scientific literature – Loh Eldon (UofA)

Poster Session II Chair: Dr. Jim Wright (Pathology, UofC)

The Temple of Asklepios at Corinth – Amber Porter (UofC) [Award for the Best HMDs Poster Presentation]

From deadly plague to life-altering prescriptions: the story of ergot as a case in favour of complementary and alternative medicine – Meghana Saincher (UofA)

Elementary my dear Mr. Bell: surgeon, professor and the real-life Sherlock Holmes – Thomas Muir (Dal)

The „ship of health“: the story of the M.V. Christmas seal – Jennifer McPhail & Jennifer Zymantas (Northern)

Polio: the people's disease – Kalpa Shah (UWO)

The role of mechanical ventilation, 1930-present – Rhonda Matheson (UofM)

Rosalind Franklin: the real discoverer of the DNA double helix? – Julian Vanderpol (UofA)

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