

The Renaissance Period and Medicine

1100- 1800

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The Introduction to Modern Medicine:

This period in the history of medicine brought some basic inventions and theories that helped modern day doctors make larger discoveries in the coming years. Even though there was much innovation during this time, many of the crude cures were still used. Many people could not afford to see a physician and used many herbal cures to try to treat wounds and diseases.

In the late 1700s, doctors experimented with creating cures for diseases like smallpox. Many doctors ended up infecting more people than saving people.

Barbers as physicians:

Barber's during this time would not only cut your hair, but could perform minor surgery! This could mean lancing boils, extracting rotten teeth, removing warts, or using bloodletting (a popular cure for many diseases. It was thought to drain the toxins from the body.)

Inventions:

Ambulance:

The idea of an "ambulance" began to be used during the crusades. Officers designated special forces to bring the wounded and dying out of the battlefield and into nearby tents.

In 1792, The Surgeon and Chief of the French Grand Army began to regularly train doctors for immediate care practices. Carriages and stretchers were used to bring the wounded from a nearby battle.

Microscopes:

Throughout the 13th and 15th century the idea of the modern microscope was being developed. First only lenses were used to magnify text or small objects. Next a small tube was used with a plate for the specimen and a lens that gave the specimen a magnification of 10x the size was used.

In the 1600s, Anton van Leeuwenhoek, the Father of the Microscope, worked with lenses to create a much finer magnification. He succeeded in creating a lens that magnified up to 270 diameters. One could now see yeast, small organisms in the water, and bacteria. His designs were later expanded to create more advanced microscopes.

Andres Vesalius:

In 1514, published the first human anatomy textbook. Before Vesalius's work, surgery and anatomy weren't very important in medicine.

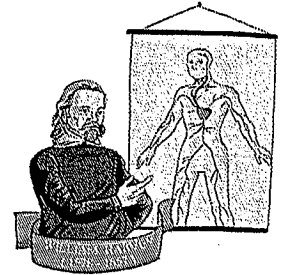
The textbook included charts of the blood and nervous systems. In 1543, Vesalius produced his most important work called "On the Fabric



of the Human Body.” It included information about more information about anatomy based on his many dissections of cadavers. He later became a royal physician to Charles the 4th.

William Harvey (1578-1657)

During the 1600s, William Harvey was proved the theory that the heart recycles blood and acts like a pump so it can circulate blood through the body. Before that point, most people believed that the heart made blood out of the food and drink that the body consumed.



Doctor's Notes:

Patient symptoms:

Nauseous

In a Confused state

Fatigue

Headache

Right arm has a weakness

Droopy right eye

Complains of elevated heart rate and hot temperature

Age: 53

Weight: 150

With the knowledge of today, the patient seems to have had what is called a “mini stroke” or TIA, Transient Ischemic Attack.

But as a doctor of the Renaissance period, I would have observed that the patient is old and may just be suffering from delusions because of age. I would have prescribed her for a blood letting and much rest.

The doctors of this period in time didn't know much about the heart. It is also thought that heart attacks caused by high cholesterol were not very common. Most people had a fairly light diet (unless you were rich) and weren't very sedentary. Even in the last 20 years with high calorie food and many less people exercising enough, the amount of heart attacks have risen steadily.

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