

‘Patients’ control or practitioners’ authority? Revisiting the early modern medical encounter’

3rd Open University History of Medicine Workshop

Wednesday 4 July 2012, 2-5 pm
The Open University in London
1-11 Hawley Crescent, Camden Town, room 2

That in the early modern medical encounter power rested with patients is still a popular view in historical writing and teaching: in a pluralist medical marketplace charlatans and learned physicians alike had to please the clients on whom they depended economically and with whom they shared a whole system of knowledge. Yet, as recent research has shown, economic control was only one side of the story and the transactions between the sick and their healers were also understood and framed in religious and legal terms. Much remains to be done to analyse the material features of medical encounters and to recover the range of negotiations between the sick and their healers in what were often prolonged interactions: culturally specific categories of trust, authority, and reputation were critical, but so were professional strategies and political conditions. Drawing on, but moving beyond research on patients’ perspective, the talks at this workshop will exemplify a range of approaches to exploring the political, cultural and social dynamics of the sickroom and in the other venues in which routine medical practice and exceptional acts of healing were performed in the seventeenth century.

Programme

- 2.00 Welcome and introduction
- 2.05 Lauren Kassell (Cambridge)
Casebooks and the medical encounter in early modern England
- 2.45 Peter Elmer (OU)
'Doing Strange Things in the Face of the Sun': the medical encounters of Valentine Greatrakes, miracle healer in seventeenth-century London
- 3.25 Coffee break
- 3.45 Silvia De Renzi (OU)
The politics of the sickroom in seventeenth-century Rome: authority, hierarchy, etiquette
- 4.25 Final Discussion
- 5.00 Workshop ends

Registration

Attendance is free, but places are limited, so please email Ms Yvonne Bartley (Y.S.Bartley@open.ac.uk) to reserve a place by **20 June**.