



MEDICINE BEFORE MODERNITY: Ancient Knowledge for the Modern World

The New York Academy of Medicine Hosts a Four-Lecture Series This Fall

NEW YORK CITY, August 30, 2005—Was ancient medicine significantly different from that practiced in the modern world? How can we learn more about it? How were surgery and gynecology developed and practiced? The answers to these and other important questions will be found in The New York Academy of Medicine's four-part lecture series that complements the Metropolitan Museum's new exhibition, *The Art of Medicine in Ancient Egypt*. On loan from the Academy to the Metropolitan Museum, the Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus (circa 1600 BC) is a highlight of the museum's exhibition. It also serves as the starting point for the exploration of ancient medicine in the Academy's fall series.

The first two lectures focus on medicine in the ancient world. They explore both the changes and continuities that mark the history of medicine. The focus then shifts to the scholarly rediscovery of ancient knowledge over six hundred years ago and its significance in the early years of "modernity."

All lectures start at 6 PM in the Academy, 1216 Fifth Avenue at 103rd Street. Lectures are free, open to the public, and are preceded by a reception at 5:30 PM. Room numbers will be posted in the lobby on the night of each event.

Here are the details:

September 27, 2005

"The Art of Medicine in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean"

David T. Mininberg, MD

New York physician and historian David T. Mininberg will discuss how ancient Mediterranean artifacts and documents reveal medical practices and beliefs about life, health, and death. This lecture accompanies the opening of the Academy exhibition, *Holes in the Head: Mending Head Injuries from Pericles to Bonaparte*.

October 27, 2005

"The World of Ancient Egyptian Medicine"

James P. Allen, PhD

Despite all of its cultural advances, the world of ancient Egypt was a perilous and uncertain environment. Medicine was one attempt to understand and deal with life in that world. In this illustrated lecture, James P. Allen, Curator of Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art will examine ancient Egyptian medicine as it is documented in art and writing.

November 29, 2005

"'An Ailment Not to be Treated': The Rationality of Pre-Modern Surgery"

Michael McVaugh, PhD

This lecture by Michael McVaugh, one of the leading scholars of medicine in the early modern period, will discuss the development of medieval surgery and the reception of ancient knowledge about surgery—such as that found in the Smith Papyrus—by medical practitioners and theorists in the 13th century.

December 7, 2005

"Gynecology and Surgery: Alliances of Knowledge and Practice in the Premodern Period"

Monica Green, Ph.D.

Dr. Green will discuss how two ancient branches of medicine, surgery and gynecology, which had been practiced in isolation as highly specialized disciplines, began to meld in the 14th and 15th centuries. Increased knowledge of Arabic surgical texts emboldened male surgeons in Europe to begin to incorporate more gynecological procedures into their surgical repertoire. This process, Dr. Green argues, begins the transfer of gynecological treatment from the hands of women to those of men.

The New York Academy of Medicine, the country's premier urban health policy and intervention center, focuses on enhancing the health of people living in cities through research, education, advocacy, and prevention. Visit us at www.nyam.org.

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Editors: Interviews with guest lecturers and Academy experts are available by appointment. .Jpg photos of James Allen, PhD, and David Mininberg, MD, are available via email. Call Maria Dering at (212) 873-6715.

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