

Searching for the past in the present

Medicina Historica closes the year 2022 with a rich number of new scientific considerations on historical issues that have strong repercussions on the current era. This is the goal of our discipline, to always recover the meaning of today's issues from history.

In fact, through the contributions published in this issue, we would always be able to connect highly medical-health topical issues to the past.

Let's think of the delicate issue of protecting patient's rights in hospitals and healthcare settings and in particular the provision of meals to Jewish patients. Porro and coauthors' article deals with the question from a historical point of view by presenting nineteenth-century models from Trieste and Venice. The same in terms of history, the theme of autopsy examinations is treated through the reinterpretation of a postmortem report from the past analyzed by Papi.

Another theme that makes us think today, namely that of vaccinations and humanitarian missions, is certainly an issue that must also be analyzed from a historical point of view. An interesting note in this regard comes from Reguera's article which presents the humanitarian mission conducted by the doctor Francisco Javier Balmis Berenguer between 1803 and 1806 for the diffusion of the smallpox vaccine in America.

Always connecting to the delicate theme of vaccination, Capasso and colleagues chose to present the historical, human, and scientific profile of Dr. Viktor Mikhailovich Zhdanov, another important figure in smallpox eradication during the 20th century, who left an important mark in worldwide vaccination strategies.

Even in the bioethics section, topics of great current interest are treated also in a historical key.

The theme of the conservation of life as a duty and a right where Pius XII's perspective is still current.

Another interesting topic is how conventional models of the doctor-patient relationship change when the impact of artificial intelligence is also considered.

In the paleopathological section, the article of Larentis et al. shows several cases of preservation of the soft tissues by presenting mummies discovered in North-West Lombardy with the aim to analyze the type of preservation of the soft tissues and to consider the enhancement of our unknown anthropological heritage.

As it is quite obvious also from the history of our journal, which has once again demonstrated in this issue to be increasingly open to internationalization, our discipline must not be held to the margins of other sciences.

Our wish is that the history of medicine, bioethics and paleopathology can continue to find scholars, even among our young students, who are passionate and willing to approach research and understand its true value.

Only through research we can enhance the university profession, to bring the true value of the academy back to the university, dissecting it from its sole professionalizing function, as a place of universal knowledge.

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