

PRESENTATION

History of health in Latin America (16th to the 21st century): institutions, subjects, debate, and practices

Natália Ceolin e Silva¹

Rhaiane das Graças Mendonça Leal²

In recent years, research around Health History has experienced important epistemological renovations, such as the inclusion of new objects of study. Likewise, the contours of the notion of science have expanded, allowing the consideration of certain practices, knowledge and institutions related to health, which were previously rejected as belonging to the discipline. Regarding the Latin American continent, we observe that its local/regional specificities, as well as its connections with global debates, have been explored by historians. Among the most contemplated themes, we can highlight the recognition of indigenous knowledge for the treatment of body and soul ailments, performance of unlicensed medical practices in the colonial period, assistance institutions of the modern era, production of scientific knowledge in the region and its connections with the global scientific community, and health policies of international cooperation.

In this dossier, the authors were invited to submit proposals for articles referring to health issues in Latin America from a historical perspective. Considering the breadth of the theme, the objective was to gather research by students that explored the relationships between health and its social, economic, and political dimensions in the region in any context. The selection of texts published here allows us to affirm the growing interest of undergraduate and graduate students in topics in the area. We attribute this trend to the consolidation experienced in recent decades by the study area and to the pandemic episode that has been experienced since 2020 by the global community, which reinforced the idea of disease as a historical event of individual and collective scale.

Due to the plurality of the theme, the seven articles that make up this dossier cover temporalities ranging from healing practices at the beginning of the conquest of American territory in the 16th century to health care policies typical of the 20th century. The research present the

¹ Natália Ceolin e Silva is a doctoral student in American History at the Universidad de Salamanca, master's in history of Sciences at the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (2021) and specialist in American History at the Universidad de Sevilla (2020). In her doctorate, she investigates hospital care in port cities in the Viceroyalty of Peru and the Viceroyalty of Mexico (18th century). Her research focuses on the history of medicine, poverty, and welfare in Hispanic America (18th century).

² Rhaiane das Graças Mendonça Leal is a doctoral student in History of Sciences and Health at Casa de Oswaldo Cruz (PPGHCS-COC), Master's in history from the same institution (2020). In her ongoing thesis, she investigates the scientific trajectory of Arthur Neiva from the point of view of the strengthening of the links between science and politics, in the first decades of the 20th century in Brazil. Her research focuses on the history of health and science, the circulation of ideas in intellectual and political networks in the First Republic and Vargas Era.

different approaches and perspectives relevant to the History of Health in the Latin American region.

We highlight the opening article of the dossier *Representaciones del oficio de la curación en conflicto. El licenciado Asensio Telles en Córdoba del Tucumán (1598)*. Through the analysis of a famous case in Argentine historiography, a lawsuit by a slave trader against a Portuguese doctor, Justo R. Tapia discusses how the affirmation of licensed medicine in modern times was conditioned by symbols and social representations. Expectations about the doctor's image reveal the importance of building social networks to affirm and legitimize oneself as an authority about medicine.

Also considering legal cases known by the historiography of health as revealing sources for understanding hierarchical disputes over healing practices in the modern era, we have the article *The place of the African diaspora in global science: circulation and asymmetry by the intermediaries of healing in 19th century enslaver Brazil*. Jacques Ferreira Pinto, in his text, observes the case studies of free and enslaved unlicensed healers from an innovative perspective: admitting the limits of studies on the circulatory nature of Kapil Raj's knowledge.

Following the theme of unlicensed healing practices in the Brazilian territory, we present the article *The hermeneutics of Von Martius on illnesses and indigenous healing practices in the work "nature, illnesses, medicine and remedies of the Brazilian Indians" (1844)*. Roberto Ramon Queiroz de Assis observes the description of Karl Friedrich Philipp Von Martius, starting from his western mental scheme, about the "other" which in this case is the indigenous knowledge about diseases and the way they conceived illness beyond a biological event.

Then we present the article *A look at Marcos Rubio Sánchez's la fiebre biliosa y otras enfermedades (1814) as a source for the history of health and disease in Cuba*. In this article, Fillipe dos Santos Portugal and Barbara Barbosa dos Santos reveals the context of the production of scientific medical knowledge on the island. Therefore, the medical treatise in question represents the questioning of European explanations that exclusively considered climatic determinations to explain the spread of fevers in the Americas. By locating the origin of evil in the ingestion of liquids, Rubio Sánchez evidences the admission of neo-Hippocratic ideas in American territory, which defended the organization of cities according to sanitary topics, such as cleaning the streets, for the control of diseases and maintenance of health. inhabitants' health.

However, urban hygiene was not limited to the removal of animal and human waste, the social aspect also influenced such undertakings. Within this perspective, some sectors of society were identified as propagators of disease and social disorder and therefore should be removed from the streets in major European and American cities. Assistance institutions then served as a stronghold for such unwanted groups. On this subject, we invite you to read two articles: the first *Warm clothing and sustenance for these people: health and immigration in Rio de Janeiro in the second half of the 19th century*, and the second *Among the "disinherited by luck" and the*

“abandoned by health”: the image of the inmates in the Guestbook of the São Vicente de Paulo Asylum in Goiás (1909-1930).

In the first, Victor da Costa Santos addresses the scientific debates and architectural changes in institutions that assist immigrants who arrived in the city of Rio de Janeiro as an alternative labor force in the post-abolitionist period. In turn, the second presents the internalization of care practices for the poor and sick in Goiás in the 19th century, focusing its analysis on São Vicente de Paulo Asylum. Based on his research, Rildo Bento de Souza answers a question related to this theme: what the citizens' impressions in relation to assistance institutions were. For this, the author has an alternative set of documents to those used in these studies, the guest books that contain comments from the city's population who visited the interior of the building. As a provocation, author asks us about the possible relationships, not demonstrated, between hygienist theories in institutional practices and discourses with racial issues. Which, in turn, connects us with the last article published by the dossier *The dangers of wet nurses for the nation in the work of Emilio Joaquim da Silva Maia (1834-1859)*. In this last article, Diego Regio Giacomassi presents us - through the analysis of the work of Emilio Joaquim da Silva Maia, a critique of breastfeeding by black wet nurses - the idea of medical science as civilizing and its articulations with the project of construction of national identity, having the body as a central element of concern.

Finally, the dossier ends with the interview given by Professor Dr. Patricia Palma. Professor of History of Sciences at the Universidad de Tarapacá - Chile, Palma answered epistemological questions about the History of Health in Latin America, challenges, and possibilities of the research area, connected past experiences with the health crisis produced by the Covid-19 pandemic and revealed to us her upcoming research projects.

We wish you all a great reading!