

Minutes of the Third Ordinary Meeting

Held on Tuesday 10th December 2019

Joint Meeting with Liverpool Medical History Society

The Fourteenth Annual History of Medicine Medical Students' Prize Evening



Back (left to right): Dr P Begley, Dr N Beeching, Dr S Ryan and Vissagan Sankaranarayanan
Front (left to right): Sumeya Faysal, Abigail Lloyd, Daisy Goddard and Mila Vasey

Mila Vasey - Winner

'HIV, The Gay Community and the Contaminated Blood Scandal'

I recently attended the Keith Haring exhibition at the Tate. In addition to the present-day follow up of the contaminated blood scandal, Haring's HIV diagnosis and campaigning inspired me to choose the topic of the history of HIV. In line with the title, my presentation would sensitively explore the origins of HIV, the impact that it had on the gay community, and brief coverage of the contaminated blood scandal.

The origins section will detail how scientists claim that HIV developed from the simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV), which is found in chimpanzees, and is believed to be a hybrid of the SIVs that naturally infect two different monkey species.

The core component of my topic is HIV within the gay community, with a specific spotlight on America. This will cover the initial wide-spread panic that stemmed from the early cases of HIV, resulting in the poorly named 'GRID'. Through this section I will also explore the stigmatisation of HIV, especially within the gay community, and high-profile cases of it. Furthermore, I will follow the medical progress made in understanding the transmission and diagnoses of HIV.

My last segment will bring the topic back to the present day, explaining how treatment has progressed to what it is today, meaning those diagnosed with HIV can now live very full and 'normal' lives. I will also touch on the contaminated blood scandal that caused the deaths of almost 3,000 people. This scandal is due to blood transfusions, largely among people with disorders such as haemophilia, and is particularly relevant as it is finally being dealt with in an official inquiry.

Abigail Lloyd – Second Place

'Women as Heroes: Trends in Childbirth Through-out Britain in the Twentieth Century'

The twentieth century in Britain undoubtedly brought a wealth of social change which included adaptations of the ways in which Women gave birth. From the end of Queen Victoria's reign to the turn of the twenty-first century, the way in which women have laboured and delivered children has seen a series of changes, from home to hospital and the beginning of back to home. I plan to examine the changes in pain relief to aid childbirth and the shift from home to hospital births, furthermore I plan to utilise primary source evidence from women in varied social classes to demonstrate how such changes persisted in all social classes, especially with the foundation of the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948. I will however use some secondary sources to further aid my study and create a full picture, including national statistics on Infant Mortality and analysis of Hospital Records. While the overarching aim of this study is to create a picture of changes in labour and childbirth with the transition into hospitals in the twentieth century, there is also some room for some close analysis of the changing availability and use of pain relief, which again sees a significant change with the introduction of the NHS. Although the development of the NHS alongside the 'baby boom' is one of the most significant developments in childbirth, we should not ignore the rest of the century in the regulation of midwives and introduction of Doctors and Hospitals to aid births. With regard to pain relief, it is important to study the evolution of pain relief for women in labour, with the development of Nitrous Oxide, more commonly known as gas and air, in 1935 and the popularisation of the use of epidurals as anaesthesia for childbirth throughout the 1960's.¹ It is necessary to explore changing attitudes towards pain relief and hospitals and 1evaluate how change unfolded in a cautious and unwilling environment. An analysis of primary and secondary evidence with regard to changing patterns of childbirth throughout the twentieth century will include a grouping of a 'before' period prior to 1948 and an 'after' period post foundation of the NHS, leading to a conclusion that the introduction of the National Health Service slowly brought women onto 'even grounds' irregardless of social class towards the end of the twentieth century.

¹ G. A. Skowronski, Pain Relief in Childbirth: Changing Historical and feminist perspectives, Anaesth Intensive Care July 2015 History Supplement, Vol. 43 Issue 1- supplement.

Daisy Goddard –Third Place

'Life in Plastic, It's Fantastic: How One of Medicine's Greatest Inventions is Now Overshadowed by Cosmetic Surgeries'

As referenced in the song, 'Barbie Girl', many people see a life in plastic as being fantastic, as it allows you to alter your appearance however you see fit. Celebrities like the Kardashian family have made plastic surgery into a worldwide phenomenon, and now many people choose to go under the knife in order to create a better, idolised version of themselves.

However, the ever-popular procedures would not be possible without skin grafts and other forms of plastic surgery. Beginning in 800BC India, the physician Sushruta developed a technique using a leaf-shaped flap from the forehead to reconstruct the nose – this is the earliest known version of what today would be termed the nose job.

There were some developments on plastic surgery in the 14th and 15th century, however because of the dangers associated with surgery at that time, surgeons were hesitant to develop the procedure further.

Throughout the 1800s, more surgeons began to experiment with plastic surgery, taking skin grafts from different parts of the body in order to reconstruct the faces of people who had been badly damaged by war. Throughout the World Wars, Harold Gillies and Archibald McIndoe worked to develop new techniques for soldiers suffering from gunshot wounds, burns and facial disfigurements. Their work brought plastic surgery into the public eye, where it developed over time to include cosmetic procedures that people today get in order to make themselves thinner, younger, or more attractive. This is a far cry from its original purpose of mending defects and injuries in the face.

This presentation looks at whether one of medicine's most life-saving inventions has now been overshadowed by its cosmetic counterpart due to the endorsement of celebrities and social media putting forward the idea that a life in plastic is fantastic.