

AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION FOR THE
HISTORY OF
MEDICINE



100
Boston 2025

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2025

8:45 am-5:00 pm CST

AAHM Virtual Conference hosted by the McGoogan Health Sciences Library at the University of Nebraska Medical Center

TIME (CST)	PAPER TITLE	PRESENTER
8:45-9:00-am WELCOME AND KEY INFORMATION Mary E. Fissell, PhD, AAHM President Carrie Meyer, MA, UNMC McGoogan Library		
9:00-10:20 am V1 PAPER/PRESENTATION <i>Reproductive Health and Healthcare around the Globe</i> CHAIR: Ravindra Waykar, Drew University, rwaykar@drew.edu		
9:00-9:20 am	<i>Managing Menstruation in Utopia: How Two Intentional Religious Communities Addressed Menstruation in the New Republic</i>	Savannah Flanagan Baylor University savannah_flanagan1@gmail.com
9:20-9:40 am	<i>Bodies in the River: Infanticide and Midwifery in Seventeenth-Century Castile</i>	Kyna Noelle Bullard University of Colorado-Boulder kybu4590@colorado.edu
9:40-10:00 am	<i>The Discourse on the Health of Sex Workers in Early 20th-century Bombay</i>	Priyanka Balwant Kale Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta priyanka.kale16@gmail.com
10:00-10:20 am	Q&A with V1	
10:20-11:00 am BREAK		
11:00 am-12:20 pm V2 PAPER/PRESENTATION <i>Race, Gender, and Healthcare</i> CHAIR: Emma Verstraete, University of Minnesota Medical School, emmaverstraete@gmail.com		

11:00-11:20 am	<i>"Many Women Come into Hospital Too Late or Die in their Homes:" Colonial Midwives and Maternity Hospital in Yorubaland, 1926-1955</i>	Tolulope E. Fadeyi University of Manchester tolulope.fadeyi@manchester.ac.uk
11:20-11:40 am	<i>Dread Radiance: X-Rays and the Perilous Inscription of Race</i>	Harriet A. Washington Columbia University haw95@aol.com
11:40 am-12:00 pm	<i>Pandemic Solidarities: Students, Women and Plague Pandemic in Calcutta 1896-1910</i>	Utsa Bose University of Oxford utsa.bose@some.ox.ac.uk
12:00-12:20 pm	Q&A with V2	
12:20-1:30 pm BREAK		
<p>1:30-2:50 pm V3 ROUNDTABLE</p> <p><i>Do Less Harm: Ethical Questions for Health Historians</i></p> <p>CHAIR: Courtney Thompson, Mississippi State University, cthompson@history.msstate.edu</p>		
1:30-2:20 pm	<i>Panelists</i>	<p>Dr. Aisling Shalvey (she/her) Maynooth University, National University of Ireland aisling.shalvey@mu.ie</p> <p>Aparna Nair University of Toronto Scarborough aparna.nair@utoronto.ca</p> <p>Claire D. Clark University of Kentucky claire.clark@uky.edu</p> <p>Michaela Clark University of Manchester michaelaclarkba@gmail.com</p>
2:20-2:50 pm	Q&A with V3	
2:50-3:30 pm BREAK		

3:30-4:50 pm V4 PAPER/PRESENTATION
Medical Knowledge and Images around the Globe
CHAIR: Kristin Brig-Ortiz, Washington University in St. Louis, kristinb@wustl.edu

3:30-3:50 pm	<i>Medical Education and Experimentation: Almshouses and the Production of Knowledge in Antebellum America</i>	Nicole L. Schroeder Kean University nschroed@kean.edu
3:50-4:10 pm	<i>Between Aspirin and Chinese herbs: Zhang Xichun 張錫純 and his Transcultural Approach in China during the Early 20th Century</i>	Wai Chung (Douglas) Cheung The University of Hong Kong u3570125@connect.hku.hk
4:10-4:30 pm	<i>Portraying Perceptions: Visual Imagery of Medicine in Late Qing Pictorials, 1872-1912</i>	Dizhen Wu SOAS, University of London 683996@soas.ac.uk

4:30-4:50 pm Q&A with V4

4:50-5:00 Closing Remarks

ABOUT AAHM

The American Association for the History of Medicine (AAHM), founded in 1925, is a professional association of historians, physicians, nurses, archivists, curators, librarians, and others.



AAHM

American Association for the History of Medicine

The AAHM promotes and encourages research, study, writing, and interest in the history of medicine including the history of public health, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing and allied arts, sciences, and professions.



ABOUT MCGOOGAN LIBRARY

The Leon S. McGoogan Health Sciences Library, one of the nation’s major health science libraries, serves the information needs of UNMC students, faculty, and staff, as well as licensed Nebraska health professionals and residents of the state. McGoogan Library aspires to exceed University of Nebraska Medical Center community expectations by creating a virtual and physical space that enhances learning, encourages innovation, provides technology for users in a meaningful way and demonstrates that we are an academic research library of the future.



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER™

MCGOOGAN HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY



Also located in the McGoogan Library is the Robert S. Wigton Department of Special Collections and Archives which collects information and archival materials on the history of medicine, and the other health professions in Nebraska, and the history of the UNMC campus community. It is Nebraska’s repository for medical-related archival materials, artifacts, and rare books.

Program Abstracts, presented in alpha order by lead author's last name

Bose, Utsa

Pandemic Solidarities: Students, Women and Plague Pandemic in Calcutta 1896-1910

This paper studies the pandemic writings of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) and Sister Nivedita (1867-1911), who were both monks of the Ramakrishna order. As the plague pandemic broke out in the imperial capital of Calcutta, British India, the city soon saw a mass public exodus. In this moment of chaos and panic, Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita wrote a number of essays which referenced the pandemic. In 1898, as the plague panic grew, the monks sent out a call for the students and women of Calcutta to step up and work towards protecting their city from the pandemic, since they considered exodus and abandonment of the city during the pandemic as the abdication of responsibility. The work of these students and women involved cleaning the city, as well as tending to the diseased. This work was, the monk's argued, one's "duty" during crisis.

My paper argues that this call for work was a different imagination of a pandemic community, one which segregated the pandemic population into two groups-- those who abandoned and those who stayed, fostering solidarity between the latter. Further, it argues that the particularity of Vivekananda and Nivedita's call was that it was a form of solidarity which mainly involved native students (mainly young men) and women. In doing so, it subverted traditional Bengali masculinity (where the older male was the voice of authority), both gerontologically and sexually, and perhaps imagined a post-pandemic world where authority rested outside the hegemonic *bhadralok* (upper-caste, upper middle-class men) community. By focusing on these solidarities, I attempt to uncover on a different history of the plague in Calcutta; one in which the plague was not only a moment of panic and tragedy, but also a moment which fostered an alternate order of the non-hegemonic 'others'; a history of survival, hope, and community-building.

Bullard, Kyna Noelle

Bodies in the River: Infanticide and Midwifery in Seventeenth-Century Castile

In 1680, the midwife Ana Lopez, nicknamed *La Parda*, was brought before the Magistrate of Toro, accused of having conspired to murder two newborns who had been given to her to be taken to the local church. She was arrested alongside several male co-conspirators, who had conspired to falsify identifications from local hospitals. According to her accusers, the midwife had conspired with her neighbors to drown two newborns in the creek that ran behind the town.

Ana Lopez is an infrequent and unique case of a midwife associated with intentional infanticide, however, the idea of the midwife intentionally murdering infants had cultural weight in the Spanish-speaking world. Rather than being the perpetrators of infanticide, midwives more frequently, were called in to testify during the trials of parents accused of infanticide, confirming the murder or absolving the accused. Her trial also took place at a time of upheaval, as a resurgence of plague, famine, floods, drought, and renewed war with France impacted the lives of those in the Spanish countryside, leading to uncertainty and desperation from expecting parents. This paper intends to explore Lopez's testimony in this context, exploring the methods she used to defend herself against the Magistrate's accusations, and how these strategies change as her interrogation and torture progressed. How did they differ from the rhetoric utilized by the male accused? Using Ana Lopez's trial as a case study, this paper intends to explore the social and legal expectations of the midwife in seventeenth-century Spain, exploring how a midwife who transgressed those lines was received and portrayed by the legal system.

Cheung, Wai Chung (Douglas)

Between Aspirin and Chinese herbs: Zhang Xichun 張錫純 and his transcultural approach in China during the early 20th century

As a renowned practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine, Zhang Xichun 張錫純 (1860-1933) published many volumes of the *Yixue zhong zhong can xi lu* 醫學衷中參西錄 (A collection of the mixed Chinese and Western medical knowledge) from the 1910s to the 1930s. What makes Zhang's works unique was his transcultural approach to understand disease symptoms, pharmacology and health recovery. For instance, he sometimes explained Western pharmacology and provided corresponding treatment plans using traditional Chinese medicine. However, historians have not yet examined the transcultural approach in the developments of traditional Chinese medicine in modern China. Zhang's works thus provide important insights for historians to understand the dynamics between traditional Chinese medicine and Western medical knowledge in China during the early 20th century.

In this paper, I argue that beyond the binary division between Chinese and Western medical knowledge, traditional Chinese medical ideas, as shown by the case of Zhang Xichun, communicated and interacted with Western medical knowledge in the early 20th century in a transcultural way. More precisely, in this process of transcultural interaction, Zhang upheld traditional Chinese medicine to cure a disease, but at the same time he applied Western medical knowledge to explain pharmacology and pathology, unveiling the possibility of the mixed use of Chinese and Western medical ideas in a medical treatment. In this paper, I will focus on the mixed use of Aspirin and Chinese medicine in this paper, because these examples scattered around Zhang's publications. By looking into the past, this paper also opens the discussion about the mixed use of traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine in contemporary society.

Fadeyi, Tolulope E.

“Many Women come into Hospital too late or die in their Homes:” Colonial Midwives and Maternity Hospital in Yorubaland, 1926-1955

This paper explores the challenges surrounding maternal health in colonial Yorubaland between 1926 and 1955, focusing on the roles of colonial midwives and maternity hospitals. During this period, many Yoruba women faced significant barriers in accessing biomedical healthcare, often arriving at hospitals too late or not at all. This study argues that colonial maternity healthcare interventions—though intended to reduce maternal mortality—often failed to adequately serve indigenous women, leading to fatal delays or reliance on traditional birth practices at home. Drawing on archival sources, oral interviews, and a comparative analysis of medical records and local accounts, this paper contributes to the ongoing historiographical debate on the intersection of biomedicine and traditional healthcare systems during colonial rule.

The paper engages with critical scholarship on the colonial medicalization of African societies, including Megan Vaughan's and Lynn Thomas's works on biopolitics and maternal care in Africa. While colonial authorities aimed to impose biomedical structures, these initiatives were often met with resistance or indifference from indigenous populations. This resistance was grounded in longstanding traditional knowledge systems, such as the roles of *Iya-Agbebi* (traditional birth attendants) in Yorubaland, who remained trusted figures despite colonial efforts to discredit their practices. The paper builds on the work of scholars such as Nancy Rose Hunt and Megan Vaughan, who highlight the hybrid nature of colonial health interventions, revealing how

indigenous women navigated between traditional and biomedical systems in their maternal health journeys.

Methodologically, this paper adopts a multi-disciplinary approach, combining archival research with oral histories of women who gave birth during the colonial period, as well as midwives who worked in both traditional and colonial settings. Ultimately, this paper contributes to broader discussions on the legacies of African colonial healthcare systems, especially concerning maternal health. By examining the shortcomings and adaptations of colonial maternity services, this study sheds light on the complexities of maternal care and the ongoing challenges of integrating traditional and biomedical practices in modern healthcare systems.

Flanagan, Savannah

Managing Menstruation in Utopia: How Two Intentional Religious Communities Addressed Menstruation in the New Republic

The period of the early republic in American history was an era of experimentation, marked by significant developments in the professionalization of medicine, the expansion of religious ideologies, and conversations around women's identities and rights. These seemingly disparate experiments often intersected, jointly shaping ideas of gender, health, and spirituality. This intersection is particularly evident in religious intentional communities established during this time, such as the Moravians and the Shakers. Both groups held unconventional views on gender, fostering innovative approaches to understanding and treating the body.

While scholars continue to explore experiences of maternity in early United States history, less attention has been given to the social understanding and medicalization of menstruation. This paper will examine how the Moravians and Shakers perceived the spiritual significance of menstruation and their approaches to the treatment of menstrual irregularities. Drawing on religious writings, medical diaries, and medical books used by these communities, a unique perspective on women's health is revealed. As both utopian congregations either permitted women to remain single or mandated celibacy, their approaches to women's health often diverged from the traditional focus on reproduction.

Kale, Priyanka Balwant

The Discourse on the Health of Sex Workers in Early 20th-century Bombay

This paper interrogates discourses on sex workers' and female industrial worker's health in early twentieth century Bombay in light of shifts in the conception of Western medicine, gender, and public health in colonial India and the world at large. In the late nineteenth century, women's bodies came under the purview of the medical gaze, widening the scope of modern medicine and population health. On the other hand, the early twentieth century witnessed developments in women-centric medicine, civic campaigns targeted at sanitation, and a worldwide focus on reproductive health. Within this context, there was an emergence of self-anointed 'social workers' in Bombay City who formed part of the global civic activism. Scholars have underlined the key significance of women's reproductive health in the arenas of social reform, medical sciences, cultural nationalism, and colonial public health in the early twentieth century while the current scholarship on the history of medicine has analysed the colonial state archives and the venereal disease campaigns in the twentieth century, informing us of the implications of these conversations on public health initiatives.

My work expands our understanding of the question of sex workers' health and women-centric medicine by closely examining the medical literature and regional archives in English. Further, I pay critical attention to the voices of health activists with a pronounced focus on the writings of health activist Raghunath Dhondo Karve in his journal *Samaj Swasthya*, a scientific and authoritative voice on sexual health from the vernacular domain of Bombay. Grounded in an assessment of the regional landscape, my paper aims to show how gendered and cultural notions of the Indian health activists, colonial administration, and medical professionals about female sexuality shaped the discourse on sex workers' health at varying levels.

Schroeder, Nicole L.

Medical Education and Experimentation: Almshouses and the Production of Knowledge in Antebellum America

Almshouse patients frequently centered in medical research, experimentation, and surgical demonstrations in the early nineteenth century. As medical schools allied with public facilities, almshouse admittees found themselves serving as living case studies. American medical imprints hinged on this patient population. Hundreds of physicians published case studies, surgical reports, and clinical observations from their experiences in almshouse appointments. Journals like the *North American Medical and Surgical Journal*, the *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*, the *Medical Examiner*, and others featured almshouse cases.

This paper considers the importance of almshouses as spaces of knowledge production and considers the complex web of power and privilege entangled in this knowledge production. Unlike many hospitals, individuals could be forcibly detained or removed to almshouse facilities in the early 1800s. As the role of almshouses in American society shifted increasingly toward carceral goals in the 1830s and 1840s, how should we interrogate the medical knowledge produced therein? This paper examines medical research produced in antebellum American almshouses. I consider almshouses as sites of contested knowledge production, and I unpack how these facilities served as spaces of disablement (i.e. spaces that caused disability). Even as medical students, apothecaries, and physicians carried out healing duties in the almshouse, they also forwarded biased and discriminatory ideas about almshouse patients. Research produced in these spaces can help us understand the interplay of race, gender, and disability in early American medical knowledge production.

Thompson, Courtney, et. al.

Do Less Harm: Ethical Questions for Health Historians

In 2021, following discussions at the virtual meeting of AAHM, we formed an online working group through the Consortium for the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine (CHSTM) called *Ethics and/in the History of Health and the Human Sciences*. The working group met once a month for two years to talk about the broad range of ethical issues that health historians, teachers, and museum professionals were encountering in their work. While some historians had started to think and write about the impact of HIPAA on archival access, for our working group the questions went much deeper into the philosophical grey areas about how we should be doing our work in ways that respected the humanity of people in the past and honored our responsibilities in the present. Rather than focusing on formal ethical approval processes, we read and talked together about how we could approach the history of healthcare from a decolonial stance.

As a result of the working group, participants decided to work together to produce a collection of essays that would explore our own experiences. That forthcoming collection, called *Do Less Harm: Ethical Questions for Health Historians*, contains 30 short, reflective, and provocative essays that are starting points for a broader discussion. Collectively, *Do Less Harm* calls for an ethical turn in health history, with this collective work as a preliminary step in this direction.

This roundtable is moderated by one of the two editors, Courtney Thompson, who will set out the background and rationale for the book, and then authors of various chapters will describe briefly their contribution and experience with the working group. Aisling Shalvey will speak to ethical concerns around human remains collections; Aparna Nair will explore the rise in the commercialization of human remains and medical records; Claire Clark will address the ethical quandaries of using diagnoses, especially stigmatized categories, in historical writing; and Michaela Clark will discuss the challenges of writing about and with clinical images. We hope to spark a discussion about and engage with efforts being made in AAHM to develop guidelines for a more ethical history of health care.

Washington, Harriet A.

Dread Radiance: X-Rays and the Perilous Inscription of Race

Medical respondents to a 2016 University of Virginia study invoked biological dimorphism to claim that Black bodies require higher levels of therapeutic radiation than do White ones. A century ago, Rudolph Fisher, then one of only 33 African American radiologists, complained that his patients shrank in dread from therapeutic radiation and that one reason he located his private radiologic laboratory in Harlem was a desire to counteract the perception of X-rays as foreign, dangerous—and as dangerously revelatory.

However, almost from their 1895 discovery by Wilhelm Roentgen, the therapeutic benefits of X-rays—and the avant-garde specialty of radiology—have been alloyed by racial misapplication, including its use to inscribe and reinforce ideas of Blackness as primitive and dangerous. This misapplication includes X-rays’ “documentation” of Blacks’ crudely divergent skulls and bones as well as the threat of tuberculous African Americans as disease vectors—to say nothing of “exposing” to view the previously occult toxic masculinity of Black men.

From the disastrous market in radiologic skin bleaching to the interpretation of X-rayed images of black man as revealing hidden proofs of primitivism, radiation was deployed to both certify Black inferiority and to provide a rationale for licensing higher (and more hazardous) dosages for Black patients. Penetrative radiologic images expanded the medical gaze to support a number of racial indictments such as Cesar Lombroso’s cognitive inferiority/criminality as well as wholly subjective assessments that undergirded searches for proofs of *negritude* that were unrelated to skin color and to visible phenotype—a latter-day *rete mucosum*. In short, X-rays seemed to have helped shepherd mythological inferiority as it metamorphosed from 19th-century pseudoscience to extant modernist tenets.

Wu, Dizhen

Portraying Perceptions: Visual Imagery of Medicine in Late Qing Pictorials, 1872-1912

This paper aims to illuminate the significant role played by Chinese pictorials in shaping medical perceptions during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The introduction of Western medicine to China was accompanied by a complex process of psychological and

behavioral adjustment, as Chinese society grappled with the impact of Western medical and cultural influences. While considerable studies have investigated the process and underlying factors influencing the reception of medical innovation in modern China, visual sources have only been superficially analysed. The medical images in late Qing pictorials offer depictions of disease, healing process, and the doctor-patients relationship, claiming an “on-site authenticity” that both shocked viewers and challenged their original cognition frameworks. Additionally, the advent of new printing technologies, such as lithography, facilitated the reproduction and widespread distribution of numerous images that were previously confined to private collections.

This paper endeavours to provide alternative insights into the role of visual culture in shaping historical perspectives on medicine and healthcare. It specifically explores how medical practices were visually represented, articulating the perception of Western medicine within the context of trans-cultural knowledge transfer. Through the meticulous analysis of both textual and visual elements in the pictorials, this study scrutinizes their impact on viewers. Furthermore, the paper attempt to explore the intersection of gender discourse, ethical discourse, and cultural values in the visual representation of Western medicine in these pictorials, shedding light on the intricate ways in which medical practices are embedded within larger socio-cultural contexts.