



ORIGINS OF EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE: NINETEENTH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS IN MEDICAL EDUCATION

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Introduction

Trinity College Dublin was founded in 1592 by Elizabeth I. By 1813, Trinity began a process of appointing dynamic professors of medicine who had trained in Leiden, Padua, and Edinburgh. Emphasis was now placed on the utilization of the most recent research. Regular autopsies were conducted, pathology and midwifery were introduced, bedside clinical teaching was initiated, chemical experimentation was conducted, and English, rather than Latin, was used in the final medical examinations. However, science did not achieve its central position within medicine without resistance. Trinity was unhappy that medicine was not book-based, like Greek and Latin. The remote, disreputable location of the medical school on the campus, together with the building of a wall separating the school from the rest of the college, symbolized an antagonism towards the medical school that lasted until 1875.

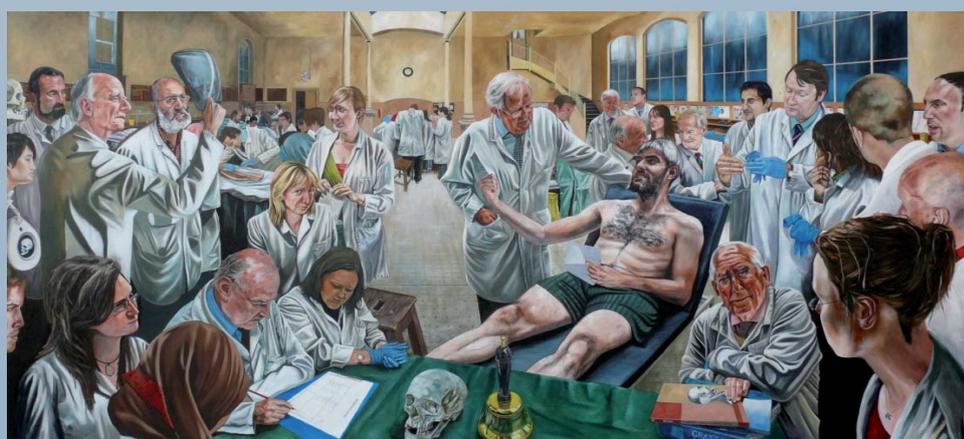


Objectives

This study will investigate the development of the medical school at Trinity College Dublin from 1813 until 1875. This period saw a rise in the profile of experimental medicine. Cell theory triumphed, the word 'scientist' was coined, and medical advances were accompanied by considerable professional evolution. A scientific ethos was adopted at the Dublin medical school while education and research became a priority, in addition to bedside patient care. The overall aim of this project will be to explore how a medical school, initially perceived as foreign and progressive, had by 1875, become fully accepted by Trinity College Dublin.

Contribution

This project will identify how medical education became increasingly informed by science. The study, part of a wider analysis of the history of evidence-based medicine, will have a number of key foci. Firstly, this project will aim to identify the significant impact of English, Scottish and Continental medicine on the Dublin school; secondly, to assess the important educational innovations introduced from 1813; thirdly, to explore the resistance of Trinity College to the medical school's emphasis on anatomical dissection, experimental chemistry, and bedside clinical teaching; and finally, to analyse the varied reasons behind the eventual acceptance of the medical school and its scientific ethos, in 1875, by the college.



Data sources

Manuscripts and Archives Research Library, Trinity College Dublin
Irish National Archive
Library of the Royal College of Physicians
The Medical College Library, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London
Electronic databases will also be searched including the Lind Library, The Cochrane Library, Medline, and also Embase, using Google, Google Scholar, and AltaVista search engines.

